

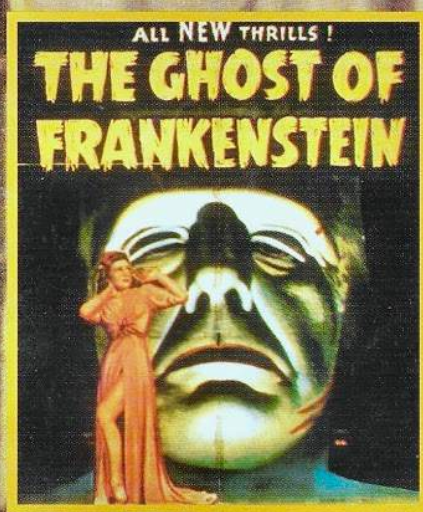
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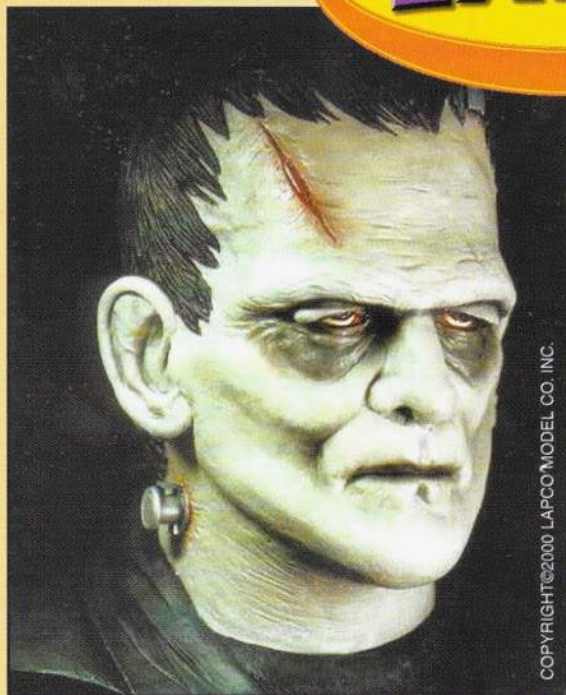
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SPECIAL THANKS

A&E, Mary Amorosi, Ronald V. Borst/Hollywood Movie Posters, Eric Caiden/Hollywood Book & Poster, Joshua Cheek, Elite Entertainment Inc., Kathleen Freeman, Image Entertainment, Anne Jeffreys, Garrett Lee, Alvin H. Marill, Joe Moe, John Morgan, Mystery!, Jerry Ohlinger's, Ann Palladino, Toni Palladino, Paramount Pictures, Pioneer Home Video, The Roan Group, Kasey Rogers, Robert Sterling, Universal Pictures, Phyl Valley, Jeff Walker, Marc Walkow, Warner Bros.

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COVER: DRACULA (1931), THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN (1942)

Scarlet Letters

I have enjoyed reading your magazine and was thrilled to see Michael D. Walker's article in #37 on Thorne Smith (since he is a local boy to us Marylanders). I had read and enjoyed many of his reprints in the early eighties. If you would be interested in a suggestion, your readers might also enjoy an article on Cornell Woolrich (unless you have already done one in a previous issue). I read many of his works that were reprinted in the eighties and found the preface written by Harlan Ellison to these works particularly interesting. (Would Mr. Ellison be interested in this project, do you think?) And, as with Mr. Smith, there are many tie-ins from his print work to radio and film.

Brenda McNeal
Columbia, MD

Brenda, we ran a piece on Cornell Woolrich back in Scarlet Street #21, and his name's come up more than once in our ongoing series on film noir. You'll also find him in this very issue, with Ken Hanke discussing NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES and FEAR IN THE NIGHT in the conclusion of PARAMOUNT HORRORS IN THE 1940s.

Ken Hanke has scored another bulls-eye with his article on the Paramount horror films in the 1940s, in your new Issue #37, although he overemphasizes the importance of the homosexual relationship between Basil Rathbone and Martin Kosleck in THE MAD DOCTOR. It was not so obvious in the 1940s; if it had been, the Production Code would not have approved the script, and the picture would not have gained the major release in Great Britain that it received under the more appropriate title of A DATE WITH DESTINY. To the average audience of its time, it was not even apparent.

I look forward to Hanke's review of AMONG THE LIVING in your next issue. It was one of the most unusual horror films to come from any studio in the 1940s and always was a great favorite of film scholar William K. Everson—but please, let's not look for any connection between its theme and Albert Dekker's real-life tragic suicide two decades later.

Michael D. Walker, in reviewing the Image DVD release of the silent THE CAT AND THE CANARY, says that the 1930 sound remake THE CAT CREEPS was directed by the author, John Willard. That is not correct. It was directed by Rupert Julian, who directed Lon Chaney's silent masterpiece, PHANTOM OF THE OPERA.

It was nice to read Mr. Walker's article on Thorne Smith, complemented by Ken Hanke's take on TOPPER RETURNS. When I was growing up in London, Smith's books were considered to be "soft pornography" and we had to read them secretly. One of my favorite Thorne Smith movies was TURNABOUT, with

Adolphe Menjou's immortal line of dialogue as he arrives at his office in the morning and says to his secretary: "Call up my wife and ask her what we're having for dinner. Tell her I don't like it."

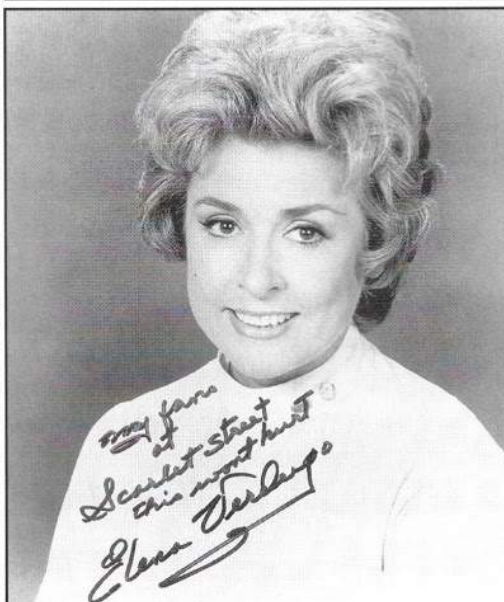
Richard Gordon
Gordon Films, Inc.
New York, NY

Scarlet Street is a fascinating publication. Tonight, I got a fire going, dimmed out most of the lights (except for one by the main reading chair), and brought out my *Scarlet Street* magazine and read. What immense pleasure I got from each and every article! The ones that really brought smiles on my face was MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM and OUR MAN ON BAKER STREET. Sherlock Holmes is an icon amongst fictional characters, and will live on forever; even now kids watch a cartoon on Fox TV, with Sherlock Holmes in the 24th Century with his robotic sidekick Watson. Thank you for the great entertainment and the memories. I hope your publication lasts forever!

Paul Dale Roberts, Commissioner
Jazma Universe Online!
<http://www.jazmaonline.com/>

Unquestionably the highlight of *Scarlet Street* #37 was OUT OF THE BROOM CLOSET: I MARRIED A WITCH AND BELL BOOK AND CANDLE by Lelia Loban and Richard Valley. Any other publication would have printed a dull synopsis with some back-

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE...



Elena Verdugo



ground information thrown in. Leave it to SS to cover the subtext—sexual, political, and otherwise—in a fresh and exciting way. It seems so obvious, but nobody else would connect two movies about witches with the infamous McCarthy witch hunts and tie it all together with the lives of the people who made the movies. This is the best thing I've ever read in *Scarlet Street*. Considering your unbeaten track record, that's really saying something!

Ann Micucci
Bethesda, MD

I really enjoyed your recent issue (SS #36), especially the articles/debate on MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM vs HOUSE OF WAX. Although I generally prefer the original films to the remakes, in this case I must agree with Richard Valley's opinion that the later version is superior. MYSTERY, seen today, suffers from what many of the horror films produced by Warners, Paramount, etc. during the thirties suffer from, which is wooden stereotypes and comedy relief that just doesn't work today. When I watch the film (as well as DOCTOR X, MURDERS IN THE ZOO, and others), I want to skip the boring and trite city reporter nonsense and get to the good parts. Although the Universal horror films of the period contain their share of dated comic relief, somehow they managed to do it in a way that was minimally distracting to the overall creepiness of the plots. Maybe this is why they are recognized as genuine classics of the genre and not just second-tier efforts, like MYSTERY.

HOUSE OF WAX, however, is a recognized classic, like its Universal predecessors. It contains a great, career-defining role for Vincent Price. It has the great pursuit through the foggy city streets at night, a scene that should stand with the PSYCHO shower scene and the FRANKENSTEIN flower scene as one of the true high points of the entire genre. As Mr. Valley observes, the supporting characters and their relationship to the plot are more fully developed. Sure, it has its share of silliness, but it seems artfully campy to today's audience and thus more enduring. I remember attending a rerelease of the film back in the seventies with a group of friends who were not classic horror enthusiasts. They all enjoyed it and not one comment was made about it being

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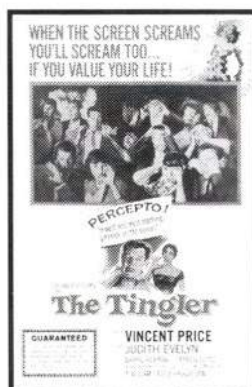
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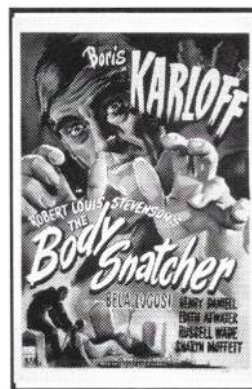
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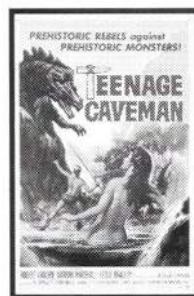
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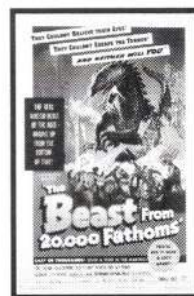
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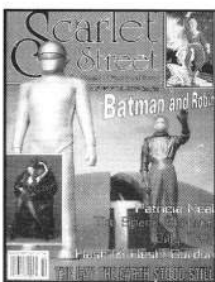
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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

an "old" film. I doubt that this would have been the case had the film in question been MYSTERY.

Rick Minor

St. Augustine, FL

I really enjoyed *Scarlet Street* #36. *HOUSE OF WAX* is certainly one of the finest, most frightening horror films ever made. Since several of the film's stars are still alive, it would be an ideal choice for DVD with audio commentary by the director, etc. Does *Scarlet Street* have much influence in bringing this to the attention of a video production company?

Also, I would like to send a fan letter to director Andre de Toth, with request for an autograph. Would you have an address where I might write him, or agency through which I could forward a letter?

I enjoyed meeting one of your representatives at the Gaylaxicon here in Arlington, Virginia last fall and I shall continue to enjoy your magazine. Thanks for any assistance.

Steve Oxenrider

CRDFilm@aol.com

Steve, while we can't give out contacts or addresses, we'd be happy to forward a letter for you. And yes, *Scarlet Street* has had some influence regarding DVD releases, specifically the Jeremy Brett *Sherlock Holmes* series.

Well, thanks to you I'm dead tired today, having sat up in bed past two devouring issue #36 on *HOUSE OF WAX*. I've always loved that film and own a copy of the video. Back in the sixties, they had *MILLION DOLLAR MOVIE* out of LA and we were treated to *HOUSE OF WAX* five nights in a row on more than one occasion. (Oh, the golden days!) My sisters, brother, and I made Vincent's chilling line, "You shouldn't have done that, my dear . . . !" a household phrase

(usually uttered before we slugged each other for something). This happens, of course, when Vincent catches our heroine scratching off a layer of wax from the face of Carolyn Jones' Joan of Arc. My brother also (endlessly!) would cover his body with his bed sheet, then sit up straight in bed to terrify me (like Vincent in the morgue scene). Your interviews and story coverage were much enjoyed and a real blast from the past. Thanks also for letting us know about Vincent's bio written by his daughter. I look forward to each issue of *Scarlet Street* and remain a faithful subscriber.

Mark Graves

Palm Springs, CA

Never hurts to subscribe, Mark. In fact, it helps considerably, because then all your money goes directly to Scarlet Street and helps keep us producing such widely appreciated issues as #36.

I enjoyed Richard Valley's interview with Thomas Beck in your Winter 1993 edition. (*Scarlet Street* #9) Aside from the Charlie Chans, Mr. Motos, and HEIDI, his movies are extremely difficult to find.

Have you any suggestions as to where one can locate them? Locating films is certainly easier since the Web was created, but not so for Thomas Beck movies. I can't believe that most of these pictures are "lost."

Thank you for any suggestions you may have.

Joan R. McDonald

film19@aol.com

Thanks for the compliment, Joan. Unfortunately, you're absolutely right—very few of Thomas Beck's films are available. Perhaps our readers will have some suggestions about where to find them, and we'll certainly report any upcoming video or DVD releases.

As you-know-who once said to Bud and Lou, "Allow me to introduce myself

. . . ." My name is Preston Neal Jones, and like so many others I began by watching *SHOCK THEATER* and reading *Famous Monsters*. Subsequently, I wrote about Hans J. Salter and *STAR TREK* for *Cinefantastique* and (more recently) about *THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER* for the Library of Congress' *Performing Arts/Motion Pictures* anthology. I'm also a fellow who reads *Scarlet Street* cover to cover, and owns every issue ever printed. There's always so much to enjoy in SS, but I'm particularly pleased with the attention you give to film music, and hope you will continue publishing the work of the estimable Ross Care.

Your new issue took me back to the day when, as a naive high-school kid, I attended the Broadway production of *A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS*. Emyln Williams had replaced Paul Scofield in the lead, but it was supporting player Albert Dekker who came out after the performance and did some Q&A with us students. My question, I blush to admit, was "Do you like getting to do a really meaty part like this, after doing a role like DR. CYCLOPS?" Dekker's reply: "Do you have any idea how much I was paid to do DR. CYCLOPS? DR. CYCLOPS was the meatiest part I ever had!"

Having established my bona fides as a *Scarlet Street* fan, I hope you will accept the following as well-intended constructive criticism from one who wishes you and your magazine well. Concerning the next-to-last issue [SS #36], it struck me that in your interview with Victoria Price and in your *FRANKLY SCARLET* column you were going out of your way to take potshots at another author's book about Vincent Price. Yes, criticism has a place in your periodical, but there was something in the tone here that came across, to this reader at least, as a bit smug and mean-

Continued on page 12

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Frankly Scarlet



Can anyone have a fuller, richer life than mine? Well, yes, definitely, but then consider: there are two towns in these United States that, in the halcyon days when Cole Porter, Johnny Mercer, Harry Warren, Bert Kalmar, and Harry Ruby were writing the nation's songs, kept popping up in lyrics. No, not New York, New York, or San Francisco with its Golden Gates and disembodied hearts—Hackensack, New Jersey, and Chillicothe, Ohio. And I've been to both . . . !

Hackensack (featured in Porter's "I Happen to Like New York" and Kalmar and Ruby's immortal "So Long, Oolong") is only a stone's throw from the *Scarlet Street* offices here in Glen Rock (neat, if your idea of fun is lobbing rocks at Hackensack), but Chillicothe (which turns up, among other places, in Mercer and Warren's "On the Atcheson, Topeka, and the Santa Fe") is considerably further afield, and if it wasn't for the fact that I spent two long-ago summers there in summer stock, I might have missed it.

Chillicothe is home to one of our country's many outdoor dramas, shows that usually dramatize historical events pertinent to the immediate locale. In Chillicothe's case, the show was—and is—about the Native American tribal chief called TECUMSEH. I loved the two summers I spent with the show, loved the Ohio people, loved usher Joni Hough who was sweet and the only completely reliable member of my staff, loved the young actor who loved to dress up as a squaw after hours (his father had written the sixties sex comedy PRUDENCE AND THE PILL, but I don't think there was any connection),

loved the producers—loved it all! I've longed to get back there ever since 1979. Last year, in a way, I succeeded . . .

In October, 1999, as part of a Halloween celebration, Chillicothe's majestic old Majestic Theatre contracted with Monster Bash entrepreneur Ron Adams to present an all-nighter of vintage fright films, including DRACULA (1931), THE MUMMY'S HAND (1940), FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943), EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS (1956), and ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES (1960). Ron, who also heads Creepy Classics videos, sold tapes in the Majestic's lobby, and also hawked *Scarlet Street: The Magazine of Mystery and Horror*—so, though I've yet to make it back in person, my "baby" was able to drop by for a visit. PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE veteran Conrad Brooks was in attendance, too (listen, there ain't nowhere Connie won't go!), and from all accounts and several no accounts a good time was had by all. I just wish I could've been there . . .

Next time! Next time!

Hey, speaking of Ohio, I did manage to get back to the state this past March (along with managing editor and devout partygoer Tom Amorosi), but it was to attend Carl and Donna Thompson's terrifyingly terrific Frightvision show in Akron, which is on the other side of the state from Chillicothe.

Like Monster Bash, Frightvision is one of those shows that, filled with stars though they are, seem cozier, cuddlier, and more intimate than most other conventions. The guests mingle with the customers, the customers mingle with the dealers, and everyone has fun fun fun till their daddy takes the T-Bird away, or something like that.

Among the guests were David Naughton (1981's AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON, who was dumped from his lucrative position as a singing, dancing Dr. Pepper spokesperson because he appeared nude in that film), Ann Robinson (1953's WAR OF THE WORLDS), Ben Chapman (who played the title role in 1954's CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON), David Hedison (1958's THE FLY), makeup master Tom Savini, Kathryn Leigh Scott (TV's DARK SHADOWS), Richard Kiel (Jaws in the

James Bond movies), Andrew Prine (1971's SIMON, KING OF THE WITCHES), Bob May (TV's LOST IN SPACE), Fred Olen Ray (1995's ATTACK OF THE 60 FOOT CENTERFOLD, which featured a "cameo appearance" by *Scarlet Street*), Don Stroud (1979's THE AMITYVILLE HORROR), and—well, here's a surprise!—Conrad Brooks! Gary Busey, whose many credits include THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY (1978) and LIVERS AIN'T CHEAP (1997), was also a guest.

It was the kind of show where you could sit down and chat with Richard Kiel while waiting for an elevator, or carry on a between-table conversation with Ann Robinson, or have Guy Williams Jr. (son of the late star of LOST IN SPACE and Disney's ZORRO) join you for a drink—very friendly, very informal, and very relaxed or busy, depending on your mood.

You'll find an ad for next year's Frightvision on page 9 of this issue. The show's moving from Akron to Cleveland—still the wrong side of the state from Chillicothe—but *Scarlet Street*'s already signed on and we look forward to seeing some of you Faithful Readers dropping by our tables . . .

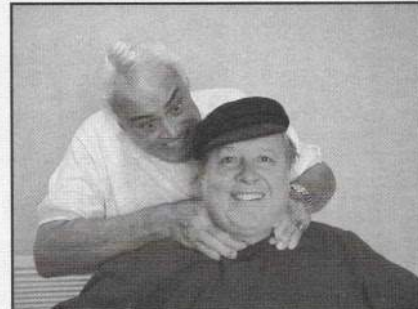
Okay, let's have a show of hands—how many of you are out there in cyberspace and have yet to drop by the *Scarlet Web* at www.scarletstreet.com? If you haven't, I trust you're all properly ashamed, because you've been missing out on reprints of classic *Scarlet* Articles from issues past (often with full-color photos), dozens of pix of the *Scarlet* Staff and assorted celebrities, a complete catalogue of back issues, videos, compact discs, and books, and—coming soon, if it isn't already there by the time you read this—brand new interviews and articles never before published in *Scarlet Street*! If you spend your time counting the minutes between issues of the one and only Magazine of Mystery and Horror, then the *Scarlet Web* is just the fix you need!

And there's something else new on our site—the *Scarlet Forum Message Boards*! Now you can chat with refugees from our masthead and your fel-

Continued on page 11

LEFT: Chillicothe's Majestic Theatre played home to *Scarlet Street* and an all-night showing of classic horror films last October. MIDDLE: Where there's a show, there's PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE veteran Conrad Brooks, who smiles for the camera as a young horror fan attending the Majestic show practices a double take. RIGHT: The cast of the splendid outdoor drama TECUMSEH, circa 1979.





Carl and Donna Thompson's Frightvision show harkens back to the more intimate convention days when stars and fans mingled for a weekend of fun. TOP ROW LEFT: Richard Kiel (*Jaws* in 1977's *THE SPY WHO LOVED ME* and 1979's *MOONRAKER*) has decided to remake *THE THING WITH TWO HEADS*, and since Rosey Grier is unavailable . . . TOP ROW MIDDLE: Tim Culbertson poses with the "eccentric" Gary Busey outside the hotel in Akron, Ohio. TOP ROW RIGHT: Tom Savini and friends. BOTTOM ROW LEFT: The Manimals (direct from the Island of Dr. Moreau!) played on Saturday night. BOTTOM ROW MIDDLE: Carl Thompson stops to chat with filmmaker and *Scarlet Street* pal Fred Olen Ray. RIGHT: Well, big surprise! It's Conrad Brooks again, and Ben (Gillman) Chapman's got him!

FRANKLY SCARLET Continued from page 10

low fans, day and night, night and day. We've been adding boards to meet your every interest, and among those

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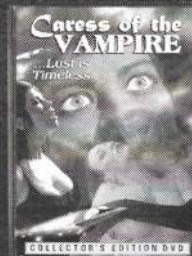
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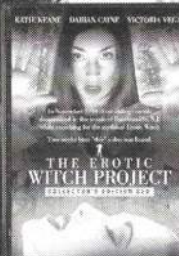
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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 8

spirited. It didn't become the editor whom I usually associate with saucy good humor (and encyclopedic knowledge of his subjects).

Better, I would have thought, to let the virtues of Ms. Price's book rise on their own merits than to have felt it necessary to elevate her tome by putting down someone else's.

Okay, I'll get down from my soapbox now. You may or may not feel my one reservation was off-base, but considering that it's the only criticism I've had in 37 issues, you must be doing something right. Right? Keep up the good work, and good luck on the health front!

Preston Neal Jones
pjones@fulpat.com

Preston, thank for the letter and the wonderful anecdote about Albert Dekker and DR. CYCLOPS. As for the remarks in SS #36 about *The Complete Films of Vincent Price* by Lucy Chase Williams, I appreciate your point of view, especially since your name places so highly on Williams' acknowledgments page, but I cannot agree with it. Victoria Price herself brought up the subject of Williams' book with no prodding, and her criticisms were, in my opinion, quite valid. That Vincent Price's life has been whitewashed in all works previous to Victoria's *Vincent Price: A Daughter's Biography* is true, though *Scarlet Street* has done its best in the past to present a fuller picture of this beloved actor. Your suggestion that I took a potshot at Williams' book in my column frankly puzzles

me, since I made no mention of it whatsoever. I *did* praise Victoria's book, but to consider praise of a rival work as an automatic knock on another's efforts is usually the province of an insecure author, not a fan. Anyway, hope to hear from you again, and thank for the inquiry about my health, which is coming along pretty well, knock on . . . wood?

First off, I want to say I love your magazine. I anxiously await each issue, and consider myself very lucky to find it in the magazine racks, since it seems to sell out rather quickly! Your most recent issue (SS #36) featuring movies about wax museums was very interesting and informative, but it was Michael Mallory's article about *TERROR IN THE WAX MUSEUM* that really grabbed my interest. In it, he mentions a movie called *ARNOLD*. I vividly remember going to the movies when I was a child and seeing the trailer for this film. I was simply dying to see this movie. I waited, and waited, and waited, and it never came to my local cinema. I've tried to locate the movie on video as well, but no such luck. Is this film available anywhere?

The second reason this particular article jump-started my mind is because it also reminded me of another movie I saw on television as a child. This one was called *CHAMBER OF HORRORS* and starred Patrick O'Neal. All I can remember about this one is that it had a vague Jack the Ripper plotline and there was a wax museum as a setting. The one point that stood out in my mind about this movie,

and the reason it scared me so much as a child, is because it takes place in my hometown of Baltimore! I thought this was some kind of docudrama when I first saw it sometime in the late sixties/early seventies. Does anyone else remember this movie?

Neither of these shows up on television with any kind of regularity, and I doubt Turner Classics or AMC will be including them in their libraries! But I'd be very interested in tracking down copies of all of three of these films. Any suggestions?

Keep up the great work, and I look forward to your next issue!

Chuck Duncan
Baltimore, MD

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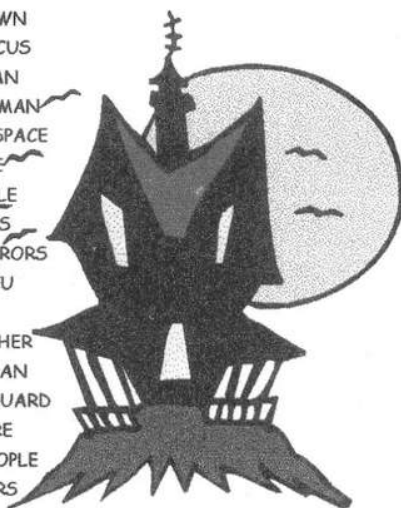
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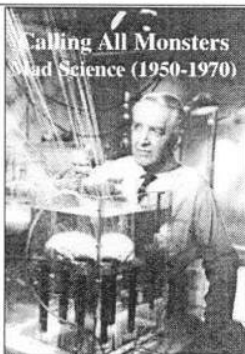
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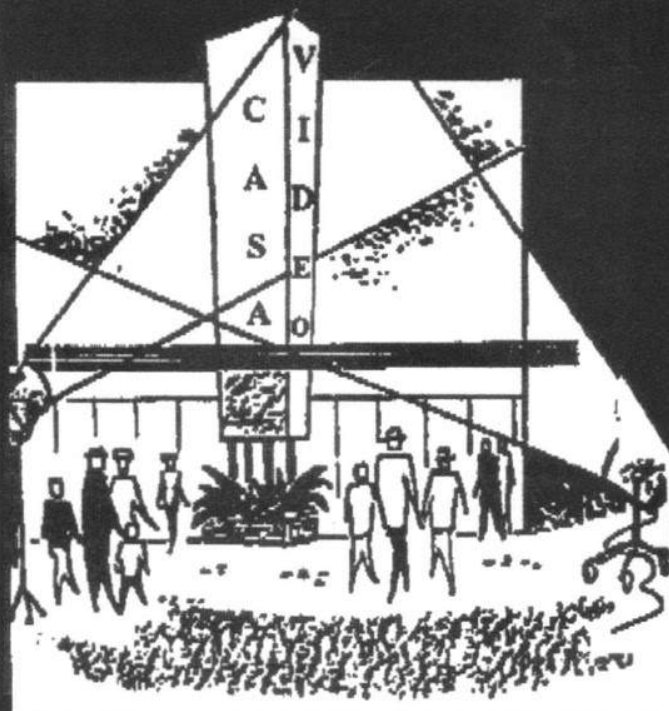
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Theatrical Thrills

Coming to theaters in June: **SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE** (Lion's Gate Films), starring John Malkovich as NOSFERATU director F.W. Murnau and Willem Dafoe as his long-in-the-tooth leading actor Max Schreck; the animated sci-fi adventure **TITAN A.E.** (20th Century Fox) from director Don Bluth; the equally animated but much sillier **CHICKEN RUN** (DreamWorks) from master clay animator Nick Park; and the just as silly and partially animated **ADVENTURES OF ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE** (Universal), starring Jason Alexander and Rene Russo as Boris and Natasha, and Moose and Squirrel as themselves.

Those uncanny **X-MEN** (20th Century Fox) mutate onto the silver screen in July, starring Patrick Stewart as Professor Xavier and Sir Ian McKellan as Magneto. Brian Singer directs from a script cowritten by **BUFFY**'s Joss Whedon. Also in July: **THE HOLLOW MAN** (Columbia), an invisibility thriller from director Paul Verhoeven starring Kevin Bacon and Elizabeth Shue; **WHAT LIES BENEATH** (DreamWorks), the Steven Spielberg-penned ghost story starring Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer; and the Wayans brothers' over-the-top horror spoof **SCARY MOVIE** (Dimension).

Future Features

Steven Spielberg is gearing up to complete the sci-fi film that Stanley Kubrick never got to start. Entitled **A.I.** (for Artificial Intelligence), the project was developed by Kubrick for over 18 years; it would likely have been his next film after **EYES WIDE SHUT**. With the blessing and collaboration of Kubrick's coproducer and brother-in-law Jan Harlan, Spielberg will adapt and direct the story about a self-aware super-computer that attempts to save Earth from a far-future ecological disaster. The cast includes Oscar nominees Haley Joel Osment of **THE SIXTH SENSE** and Jude Law of **THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY**. Shooting starts in July for a planned release by Warner Bros. in Summer, 2001 (an apropos year for a Kubrick project).

Johnny Depp plays yet another pre-modern police investigator in New Line Cinema's **FROM HELL**, but instead of tracking down a supernatural headless horseman, this time he'll be pursuing the flesh-and-bloody Whitechapel murderer.

This dramatization of the Jack the Ripper killings is based on the comic book by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell. Sir Nigel Hawthorne is Sir William Gull, royal family physician (and Ripper suspect), and Heather Graham is slated to play one of Saucy Jack's unfortunate victims.

Writer/director John Carpenter returns to outer space after 28 years (his 1972 debut feature was **DARK STAR**) with the sci-fi/western/horror film **GHOSTS OF MARS**, in preproduction at Sony Pictures. Actor/singers Courtney Love and Ice Cube star as members of a police squad in a Martian frontier settlement 175 years in the future. The plot concerns a mining colony that disturbs an ancient burial ground, causing the titular ghosts to wreak major Martian mayhem. Expect some spectacular fight scenes staged by

scripted by William Broyles (cowriter of **APOLLO 13** and **ENTRAPMENT**). No official word on the plot of the new ape epic, which Fox says is neither a remake nor a sequel, but a reworking of the original concept. Rumor has it that the lead astronaut role is written for a 20-something Leonardo or Matt type, rather than a 40-something Chuck Heston type. It's a madhouse! A madhouse! Fox has already penciled in July 4, 2001 as a release date.

Upcoming Attractions

Warner Bros. brings Anne Rice's vampire Lestat to undead life again in **QUEEN OF THE DAMNED**, an adaptation of the third novel in Rice's Vampire Chronicles. The role of Lestat has yet to be cast (don't look for Tom Cruise to return), but the part of Akasha the titular Queen has gone to pop singer Aaliyah, who was recently seen in the Jet Li actioner **ROMEO IS BLEEDING**. Production is set to start in Australia this spring.

Hollywood's hotties are notorious for artificially nipping and tucking themselves back into a youthful state. A new Tinseltown-set film version of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* takes these attempts to the extreme. Wilde's tale of a man who stays young while his portrait in the attic ages is being adapted and directed by Alexander Payne, coscreenwriter of last year's caustic comedy **ELECTION**.

X-FILES creator Chris Carter plans to make the move to big-screen director with **THE WORLD OF TED SERIOS** (20th Century Fox), a fact-based supernatural feature he'll cowrite and coproduce with TV partner Frank Spotnitz. The story, which sounds a lot like the fourth-season **X-FILES** episode "Unruhe," concerns a man who can allegedly create photographs by transferring his thoughts onto film.

Popular crime writer James Ellroy, author of *L.A. Confidential*, has had his autobiographical novel *My Secret Places* optioned for filming by producer Robert Greenwald. The book concerns the murder of Ellroy's mother when he was 10, and his search as an adult for her killer. Filmmaker Jan Oxenberg, noted for her documentaries on lesbian issues, will adapt and direct the screen version of Ellroy's book.

Pinhead Meets Pinocchio

An alliance between Clive Barker and the Walt Disney organization may seem unlikely, but that's just what's happening. The rights to Barker's upcoming fantasy



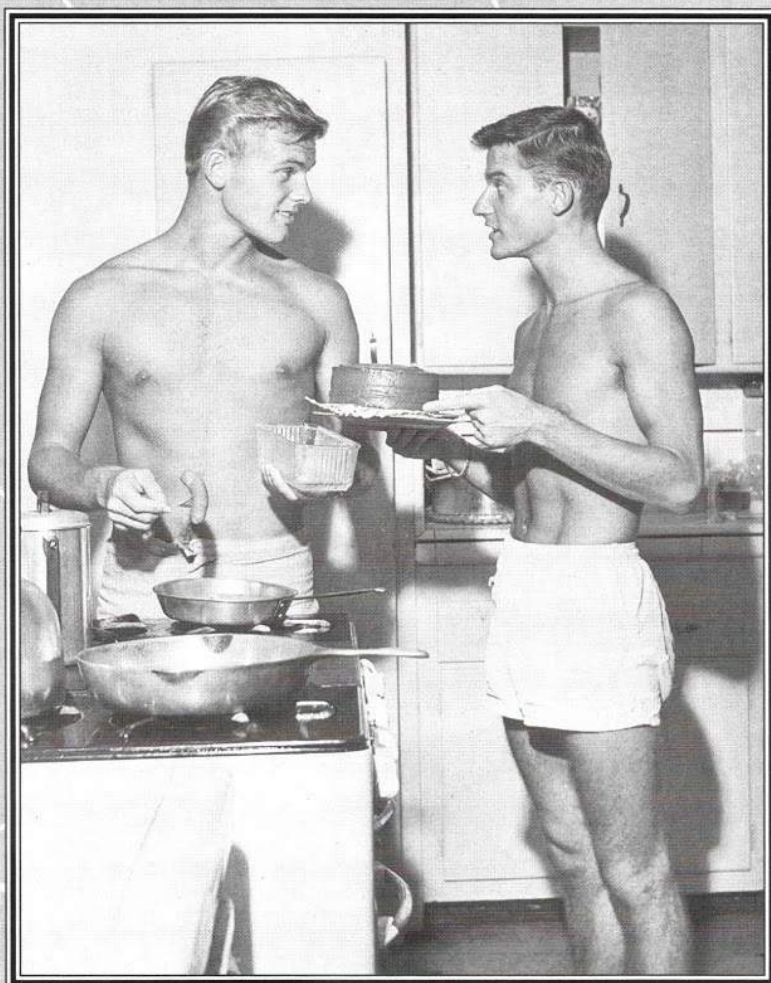
HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER (1958) is scheduled for a remake, but does that mean the Teenage Werewolf and Teenage Frankenstein will return with it? Stay tuned to this column!

the Hong Kong martial arts expert who supervised **THE MATRIX**.

And you thought Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock were getting long in the tooth! In August, Clint Eastwood, Tommy Lee Jones, and James Garner star as geriatric astronauts in **SPACE COWBOYS** (Warner Bros.). This band of retired Air Force pilots are recruited by NASA to retrieve a similarly aging satellite in danger of causing mass destruction. I guess all the real astronauts were busy helping NASA convert inches to millimeters.

Tim Burton's Big Ape Adventure

After seven years of monkeying around, 20th Century-Fox is finally ready to proceed with their new version of **PLANET OF THE APES**. Tim Burton has been hired to direct, and is working alongside Richard Zanuck, producer of the 1968 original. Burton will doubtless put his own twisted spin on the project's new story line,



TAB: Say, Roddy, have you seen the swell new Discussion Boards on the Scarlet Website? You can sign on and talk about classic Universal Horrors, Hammer Films, Sherlock Holmes, Charlie Chan, Alfred Hitchcock, Tarzan of the Apes, The Thin Man, Jack the Ripper, and just about anything else that comes to mind! Why, heck, you can even talk about sexual subtexts in old pictures . . .

RODDY: Subtexts? What subtexts?

Hot Dog! You asked for 'em, you got 'em—and they really take the cake! Nothing holds a candle to the brand new Discussion Boards at . . .

Scarlet Street

The Website of Mystery and Horror

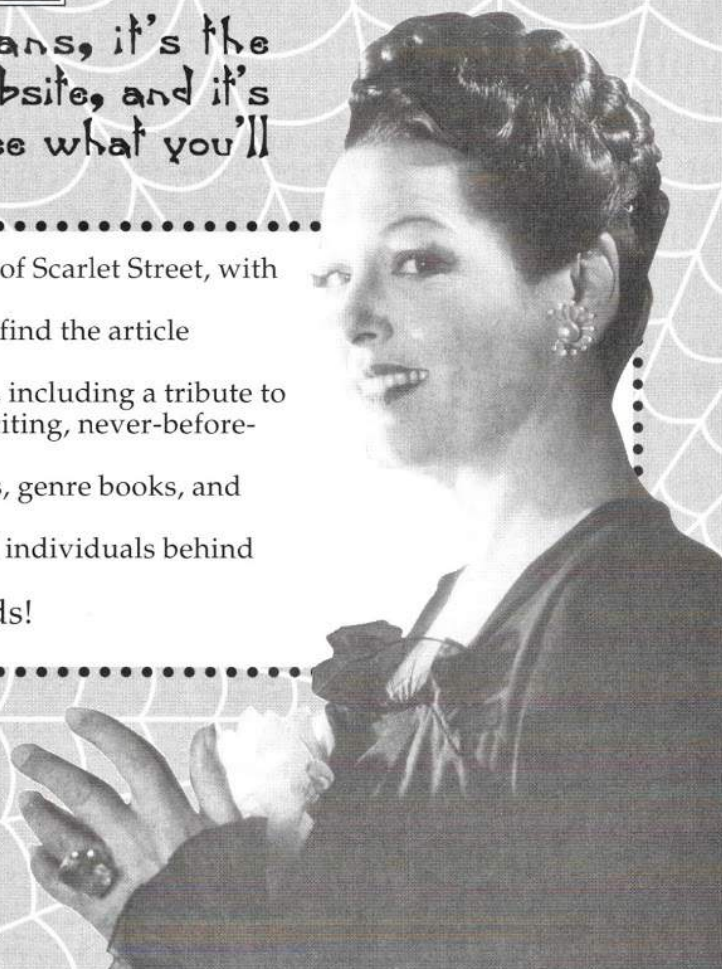
Yes, sir, horror and mystery fans, it's the Spider Woman's all-purpose Website, and it's designed especially for you! Just see what you'll find online

- ★ Thrilling articles and interviews from past issues of Scarlet Street, with photographs in full, blood-drenched color!
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- ★ A complete Scarlet Street catalogue of videotapes, genre books, and compact discs.
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- ★ And our Spanking New Discussion Boards!

. . . so come on in, as the spider said to the fly. Don't delay! Sign on today at:

www.scarletstreet.com

Website designed by John E. Payne





THE AVENGERS A&E Home Video DVD

Eight two-disc sets, \$44.95 each

The phrase "cult TV show" was probably invented for THE AVENGERS, the quintessentially swinging sixties series that was equal parts James Bond and bondage. The show's origins actually predated 007 mania; a 1960 crime series entitled POLICE SURGEON on Britain's ABC received a format and name change a year later with the addition of a gun-toting secret agent named John Steed, played by Patrick Macnee. But it was the show's later and most famous incarnation, which paired Macnee as a more urbane Steed with Diana Rigg as the vivacious adventuress Mrs. Emma Peel, that first captivated American audiences. For us Stateside viewers, as well as for viewers worldwide, the exploits of Steed and Mrs. Peel typified the sixties spy craze—and fed our Beatles-bred appetite for all things English—with high style, great humor, a bit of kink, and cheekily overdone dollops of Britishness with a capital B.

For decades, AVENGERS addicts have had to get their fix with sporadic late-night TV showings and home videos of dubious quality and legality. All this changed 10 years ago when the Arts & Entertainment cable TV channel acquired the show, initially for regular telecasts, and recently for long-overdue top-quality home video releases. Now A&E Home Video is releasing THE AVENGERS on DVD—and, believe me, Mrs. Peel, they're needed.

As with the VHS editions, A&E has packaged the shows in multi-episode

volumes arranged in the original production order. The video transfers from the original British film masters are truly stunning to behold; never has Steed's broly looked more crisp, nor Emma's auburn mane more vivid (in the color episodes, at least).

Every one of the Macnee/Rigg episodes is included within these eight double-disc sets. AVENGERS '65 and AVENGERS '66 (two sets each) contain all 26 of the black-and-white episodes—judged by many to be the cream of the crop—and the four AVENGERS '67 sets hold all 25 of the color shows, with their increased quotient of diabolical masterminds and witty sci-fi storylines.

Every Avengerphile has his or her own favorite episodes, and it would be presumptuous to try and pick out the best of the bunch. So, here goes! My selection as the best of these discs is AVENGERS '66, Set Two, Volumes Three and Four. Here's the dossier, straight from M.I. 5 1/2:

"The Danger Makers"—Steed and Mrs. Peel infiltrate a secret society whose members crave mortal danger like a drug. The leather-suited Emma must pass a test on an elaborate apparatus that will electrocute her if she fails! Nigel Davenport (Van Helsing to Jack Palance's DRACULA in the 1974 Dan Curtis telefilm) and Douglas Wilmer (BBC-TV's original Sherlock Holmes) are among the danger addicts.

"A Touch of Brimstone"—Mrs. Peel appears as the spike-collared Queen of Sin in this notorious episode about a hedonistic, treasonous modern-day version of The Hellfire Club. The uncut version on this disc features Peter Wyngarde (1962's BURN, WITCH, BURN) doing some seri-

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"What the Butler Saw"—A couple of former Doctor Watsons (Thorley Walters and Howard Marion-Crawford) are suspects in a plot to sell secret military defense plans.

"The House That Jack Built"—Mrs. Peel becomes trapped in a mazelike mansion by an evil genius (Michael Goodliffe of Hammer Films' 1964 THE GORGON) who is out to drive her insane!

"A Sense of History"—Another memorable Emma Peel outfit (a clingy Robin Hood number) highlights this tale of murder and political intrigue on a university campus. Jacqueline Pearce, the title lizard of Hammer's THE REPTILE (1966), appears as a shifty campus coed.

"How To Succeed at Murder"—Sarah Lawson of THE DEVIL RIDES OUT (1968) portrays a member of a cadre of murderous corporate secretaries who are gleefully killing off their bosses.

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As evidenced above, mystery and horror fans can spot many familiar faces among THE AVENGERS guest stars. Also on view are Barbara Shelley and Jon Pertwee ("From Venus With Love"), Michael Gough ("The Cybernauts"), John Wood ("The Bird Who Knew Too Much"), Andre Morell ("Death at Bargain Prices"), Donald Sutherland and Charlotte Ramp-



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(Storey is played by Mervyn Johns, who appeared in the 1945 classic DEAD OF NIGHT and is perhaps best known to those with Christmas on their minds for his role as Bob Cratchit in 1951's A CHRISTMAS CAROL, a film also featuring—Patrick Macnee.) Needless to say, Steed regains the upper hand handily in both cases.

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Vampires Over Off-Broadway

by Richard Valley

While it may be true that a rose by any other name will still come up roses, it's true without a doubt that a vampire by any other name is usually Dracula—or based very closely on Dracula. In 1922, Florence Stoker, the widow of *Dracula* author Bram Stoker, sought to keep the F.W. Murnau film *NOSFERATU* from the screen. Her reason for doing so was righteous, if mercenary: the film was an unauthorized adaptation of her late husband's most famous novel. The widow Stoker succeeded in banning *NOSFERATU* from public view, but in her second holy mission—to have every last print of the picture destroyed—she thankfully failed. *NOSFERATU* survives to this day, and among many film scholars unimpressed by the gushing blood of Hammer's *HORROR OF DRACULA* (1958) or the plodding theatrics of Universal's *DRACULA* (1931), it's the definitive version of Stoker's work.

There have been many stage presentations of *DRACULA* over the years—the famed 1920s production starring Bela Lugosi, the seventies revival with Frank Langella, and a veritable swarm of musicals bat-tapping their way into our hearts—but *NOSFERATU*, which may be definitive but still differs substantially from its source, itself has never reached the stage. Not till now, that is . . .

The play, *NOSFERATU*, described as “A Classic Tale of Horror and Redemption,” directed by Rene Migliaccio and adapted to the stage from the silent film by F.W. Murnau and from Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, is produced by the Telluride Repertory Theatre Company in association with Lucas Productions. It premieres in New York City on May 25 and plays through June 11, 2000.



Heading the cast is an actor following family tradition by taking on the role of the Vampire King: Nikolai Kinski, whose late, great father Klaus played the lead in Werner Herzog's 1979 remake of the silent classic. Neither is Nikolai's sister Nastassja a stranger to either horror or remakes: she starred in Hammer Films' final fright flick, *TO THE DEVIL A DAUGHTER* (1976), and later took on the Simone Simon role in Paul Schrader's 1982 remake of *CAT PEOPLE*. Nikolai is backed by a cast of 23 including 14 chorus members.

NOSFERATU is described by producer Paul Lucas as an innovative, multimedia production with an original, classical/techno score by French composers Amaury Groc, Toïdoi, and Beru. In keeping with the play's silent-movie origins, there is little dialogue. Director Rene Migliaccio, a winner of the prestigious Drama Desk Award who first directed *NOSFERATU* at the University of Paris in 1996, refers to the show's acting style as “expressionistic-realism.” Francois Tomsu's costumes and scenic design is inspired by the works of Caspar Friedrich and other 18th and 19th century romantic painters. The Telluride Rep, based in Telluride, Colorado since 1990 and dedicated to “creating and developing original works using a distinctive blend of Eastern and Western performing disciplines,” has teamed with Lucas to bring what promises to be a very avant garde show to the Big (blood red) Apple.

NOSFERATU plays at HERE, 145 Avenue of the Americas, Tuesdays through Sundays at 8:00 (in the evening, of course), with special midnight performances of Fridays. For tickets call (212) 647-0202 or visit HERE's website at www.here.org.

NEWS HOUND

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THE MATRIX, and THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT; remakes of LOGAN'S RUN, FORBIDDEN PLANET, and THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN; and a 10th STAR TREK feature. Also watch for big-screen versions of Hanna-Barbera TV cartoons SCOOBY-DOO WHERE ARE YOU? (with Mike Myers as Shaggy) and JOSIE AND THE PUSSYCATS.

Television Terrors

ULTRAVIOLET, the six-part drama from Britain's Channel Four that's been compared to THE X-FILES, may become a Stateside TV series. The Fox network has completed a pilot episode for the show, which concerns a secret squad of vampire hunters made up of police, scientists, and the military. Performing in the U.S. version are Madchen Amick (Shelly Johnson of TWIN PEAKS) and Joanna Goings, who

suffered vampiric experiences in NBC's 1991 DARK SHADOWS revival. Also starring is actor Idris Elba, the only known holdover from the original series.

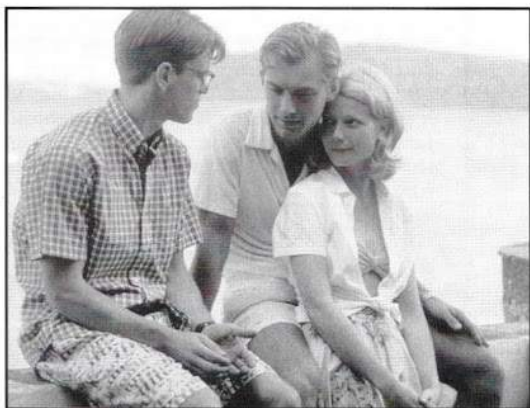
Arts & Entertainment Network, very pleased with the March showing of their Nero Wolfe telefilm THE GOLDEN SPIRIT, is negotiating with Jaffe/Braunstein Films to bring more productions featuring Rex Stout's famed sleuth to the small screen. Whether further adaptations will be formatted as two-hour movies or one-hour condensations remains to be worked out. (We're hoping for the former.) Stout's novel *The Doorbell Rang* has been mentioned as the next production—the same novel that served as the basis for the 1977 NERO WOLFE TV movie starring Thayer David.

CHARMED producer Aaron Spelling goes from bewitched babes to haunted hospitals with ALL SOULS, a proposed fall series for the UPN network. Spelling

teams up with TWIN PEAKS producer Mark Frost for the pilot episode, which stars Grayson McCrouh, Megan Ward, and Serena Scott Thomas as doctors who deal with even scarier stuff than malpractice suits.

The broadcast networks are taking Showtime's lead by creating some of their own horror/fantasy anthology programs. Fox's new fall thriller series NIGHT TERRORS, produced by X-FILES story editors Dan Angel and Billy Brown, premieres with an episode starring Aidan Quinn as an NTSB official who learns he has a bizarre connection to the plane crash he's investigating. The WB network's DARK REALM is a TWILIGHT ZONEish show hosted by the frequently scary actor Eric Roberts. The international coproduction will be shot in Europe with performers from both sides of the pond.

Lou Arkoff, son of AIP producer Samuel Z. Arkoff, joins with effects whiz Stan



THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY, one of last year's best films (and cheated by a lack of Oscar nominations) is due out on DVD in June. Pictured: Matt Damon, Jude Law, and Gwyneth Paltrow.

Winston next year to produce CREATURE FEATURES, a series of five feature-length flicks for HBO inspired by the elder Arkoff's monster movies of the fifties. Slated for remakes are THE SHE CREATURE, HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER, and THE BRAIN EATERS, the latter to be written and directed by FROM DUSK TILL DAWN's Robert Rodriguez.

The Home Video Vault

Arriving on DVD in June: THE GREEN MILE (Warner Bros.), BICENTENNIAL MAN (Buena Vista), and THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY (Fox). Also available in June are two multititle retrospectives: a Roger Corman set featuring ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES, WASP WOMAN, and BUCKET OF BLOOD (\$19.99), and a Fay Wray collection containing THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME and THE VAMPIRE BAT (\$19.99). Also available on DVD is the Ian Richardson Sherlock Holmes adaptation THE SIGN OF FOUR (\$24.99), with liner notes by *Scarlet Street's* own Reditor, Richard Valley.

MGM/UA has just released the next wave of James Bond DVDs. THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH gets its premiere release, joined by five other titles—DR. NO, ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE, THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN, THE SPY WHO LOVED ME, and MOONRAKER—each in elaborate special editions that include director's commentaries, new behind-the-scenes featurettes, and more.

Stake your claim for the INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE special edition DVD, available from Warner Home Video in July. Extra bits and bites include a special introduction by author Anne Rice and director Neil Jordan, an audio commentary by Jordan, and a newly-produced documentary featuring interviews with all the principal actors. Also arriving on DVD in July is Universal's special edition of JAWS, featuring deleted scenes, outtakes, and other toothsome extras.

VCI Entertainment is planning a home video release of the elusive 1940 15-chapter Republic serial DRUMS OF FU MAN-CHU, starring Henry Brandon. However, VCI is holding off until they can acquire

better source material for their video master tape. An eventual DVD release is expected if the print quality is up to snuff. Return for the next thrilling installment of this column for more Fu news.

Future DVD releases include new Hammer horrors from Anchor Bay: SCARS OF DRACULA, DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE, and LUST FOR A VAMPIRE. Warner Home Video may be preparing some Hammer DVD releases of their own with HORROR OF DRACULA, THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and THE MUMMY, but fans may not see these till the fall of 2001.

In a recent radio interview, George Lucas dropped the news that Industrial Light and Magic is working on DVD editions of the STAR WARS movies—including PHANTOM MENACE, which will include extra footage—but don't expect to see any of these discs before 2001.

Fearsome Flotsam

Classic Universal monsters will soon stalk your local bookstore. This June will see the publication of author David Jacobs' *The Devil's Brood*, which is a sequel to Jeff Rovin's very entertaining 1998 novel *Return of the Wolf Man*. Jacobs resurrects Dracula, the Werewolf of London, Frankenstein's Monster, and Frankie's Bride for a story that mixes some voodoo hoodoo with the Gothic goings-on.

Fans of classic film and television will want to head down south to the Memphis Film Festival this August 2-5, where you can hobnob with guests of honor Beverly Garland, Troy Donahue, Johnny Duncan (youthful ward Dick Grayson of the 1949 BATMAN AND ROBIN serial), and others. Visit the festival's website for complete information: <http://www.ia.net/marydee/memphis/index.htm>

Gone, but never to be forgotten: artist Edward Gorey; shock rock pioneer Screamin' Jay Hawkins; authors Sarah Caudwell, Catherine Crook de Camp, and Jack Higgins; composers George Duning and Arthur Morton; songwriter Pee Wee King; singer William Oliver Swofford; cinematographers Hal Guthu, Lothrop B. Worth, and Otello Martelli; actor/TV writer Stanley Ralph Ross; TV host Durward Kirby; radio announcer Bob Hite; makeup artist Robert Jiras; screenwriters Harold Greene and Bernardino Zapponi; producers David Levy, David Merrick, Sy Weintraub, and Alexander Cohen; director Newt Arnold; and actors Maria Alba, Joel Ashley, Christopher Cary, John Colicos, Richard Collier, Alex Dreier, Michael Dyne, Rex Everhart, Stanley Goethals, Begona Palacios; Charles Gray, Peter Jones, John Arnatt, Anita Dangler, Lila Kedrova, Larry Linville, Steve Reeves, and Claire Trevor; and Harry W. Prichett, creator of WINKY DINK AND YOU.

Send The Hound your questions, comments, and compliments via e-mail to TheNewsHound@yahoo.com.



Usual Suspects **PERRY MASON**

Have you reached the point where you despair of ever seeing your favorite star or character actor of yesteryear in something you haven't seen a dozen times? Well, you can find them in the strangest—and most entertaining places, including old episodes of PERRY MASON, the classic mystery series starring Raymond Burr, Barbara Hale, William Hopper, Ray Collins, and William Talman (a great bunch in themselves).

Not only does genre favorite Morris Ankrum turn up in episode after episode as a judge, but you'll find such other B-movie icons as Whit Bissell ("The Case of the Crooked Candle"), Peggy Castle ("... the Negligent Nymph"), Dabbs Greer ("... the Fugitive Nurse"), Paul Picerni ("... the One-Eyed Witness"), BATMAN's Yvonne Craig and Neil Hamilton (both in "... the Lazy Lover"), Fay Wray ("... the Prodigious Parent"), Patricia Medina ("... the Lucky Loser"), Cecil Kellaway ("... the Glittering Goldfish"), Ludwig Stossel ("... the Shattered Dream"), Dick Foran ("... the Bedeviled Doctor"), Ray Stricklyn ("... the Bashful Burro"), Marie Windsor ("... the Madcap Modiste"), Hugh Marlowe ("... the Slandered Submarine"), Kasey Rogers ("... theirate Inventor"), Bruce Bennett ("... the Misguided Missile"), Coleen Gray ("... the Wandering Widow"), Faith Domergue ("... the Guilty Clients"), Robert Lowery ("... the Roving River"), Zasu Pitts ("... the Absent Artist"), THIS ISLAND EARTH's Jeff Morrow and Rex Reason (both in "... the Ancient Romeo"), and Keye Luke ("... the Weary Watchdog").

The complete series is available from Re-TV Video Library, remastered and with informative (if brief) liner notes. Call 1-800-638-2922 for information.

—Drew Sullivan



SCREEN...



and Screen AGAIN!



Scarlet Street's DVD and Laser Review

BARBARELLA

Paramount Home Entertainment
DVD, \$29.99

Jean-Claude Forest's *BARBARELLA* (1968) started out as a sexy, sci-fi themed comic strip published by *Le Terrain Vague* in 1964. Our 40th-Century heroine went from adventure to adventure with a minimum of clothing and a maximum of sexual intercourse, saving numerous people and civilizations from the bondage of tyrants, ignorance, misunderstanding—and sometimes themselves. She was always the dominant force; coming in when things looked their worse and were on the point of collapse, she would save the day and reward whomever (male, female, or robot) with her body.

Roger Vadim, of *AND GOD CREATED WOMAN* (1956 and 1988) and *DANGEROUS LIAISONS* (1959) fame, was soon signed to make the film version for Paramount, with his then sex-kitten wife Jane Fonda as *Barbarella*. Fonda was perfect

for the role. Not only was she an accomplished comedienne, having already made *CAT BALLOU* (1965) and *BAREFOOT IN THE PARK* (1967), she also resembled the comic-book character. The \$9 million budget afforded the project a good cast (including Marcel Marceau, David Hemmings, and Milo O'Shea) and high production values. The film ultimately credits eight writers, including Vadim, Forest, and Terry Southern, who had also worked on the screenplays for *DR. STRANGELOVE* (1964) and (uncredited) *CASINO ROYALE* (1967). The finished *BARBARELLA* seems very much like *CASINO ROYALE*: a very sixties, very busy, episodic mishmash of the original source. Characters, locations, and even dialogue ("It's really too poetic a way to die.") are straight from the comic source, but changed in tone. Unfortunately, the *Barbarella* of the film is a passive character, as befitting Vadim's opinion of women. She still wears revealing



outfits, engages in a lot of sex, meets the same people—but she initiates nothing. Things happen around her. Wars are fought and characters die with hardly any intervention from our heroine. Regardless, the movie is still a lot of fun and the DVD shows it off very well.

Paramount Home Video presents *BARBARELLA* in its

original 2.35 aspect ratio and mono soundtrack (in English and French). A good quality source print is used, showing off all of Mario Garbuglia's sets and Jane Fonda's physical assets. Even though the DVD lists a PG rating (the film was cut to PG for the 1977 rerelease) the print is the original Rated M version, with an unobstructed opening credits striptease. The disc also features a nice letterboxed (2.35:1) copy of the trailer and an easy-to-access menu featuring the classic Hildebrandt rerelease artwork.

—Jeff Allen

BARON BLOOD

Image Entertainment
DVD, \$24.99

Image Entertainment picked the right film with which to kick off the Mario Bava Collection. This is the one picture that encapsulates the director's many faults and virtues. It's neither as good as *BLACK SUNDAY* (1961) nor as bad as *DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE GIRL BOMBS* (1966), but it's still of considerable interest to fans of Bava and Italian horror cinema. Regrettably, Image opted to use the same transfer contained on Elite's grainy laserdisc.

BARON BLOOD (1972) tells the story of Peter Kleist (Antonio Cantafora), who is interested in studying his genealogy. He owns a parchment believed to have the power to resuscitate his evil ancestor, the bloodthirsty Otto von Kleist (Joseph Cotten), better known as Baron Blood. Naturally, this is too compelling an opportunity to pass up, and he and his new-found girlfriend, Eva Arnold (Elke Sommer), proceed to raise the dead. Needless to say, Kleist the elder—who quickly becomes Kleist the Cotten—goes on a killing rampage. Now Peter and Eva must find a way to send him back to hell...

Bava discards his trademark color schemes—sure, there's a blue light here and a red sweater there, but nothing that really stands out—in favor of a chiaroscuro approach. (He wasn't the only director to do this in 1972; Terence Fisher perfected the technique, painting a Rembrandt-like picture of an insane asylum in Hammer's *FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL*.) The creative use of lighting and lack of color, however, is offset by too many zooms and some decidedly bad edits. One moment a little girl (Nicoletta Emmi) is running from the baron, the next she's sitting beside her bicycle with a bleeding knee.

The Vincent Fotre script is likewise uneven. The film hardly creates any sense of verisimilitude as the undead goes to a local doctor to be sutured; nor does it help matters that the heroine concludes that such was the case when the dead doctor's body is found. Still, such scenes are counterbalanced by atmospheric murders and chase sequences.

Like the film, the DVD presentation has good and bad aspects. Almost eight minutes of footage excised on *BARON BLOOD*'s American release has been restored, though the material is hardly as

gory as legend would suggest. The letterboxing is slightly off, with credits bleeding on the left side. As for the transfer, the edges of the extremes—lights and darks—appear grainy. Color, particularly red, fares better. The theatrical trailer is

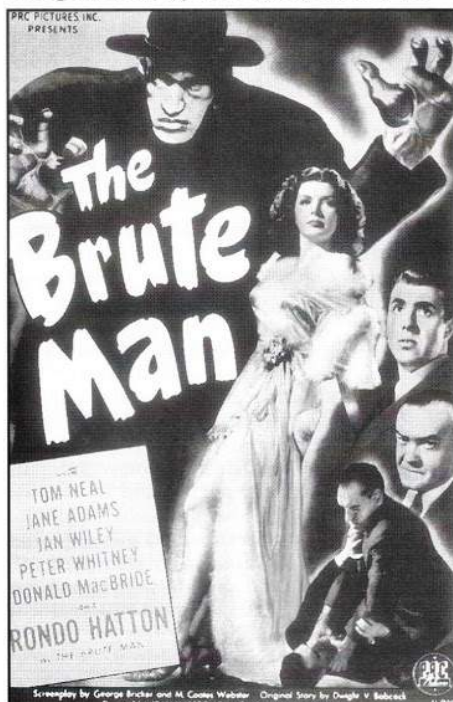


murky, but at least it's offered. There is a photo/poster gallery for anyone interested in knowing what Bava looked like, and Video Watchdog publisher Tim Lucas provides the uniformly excellent liner notes. (Producer Alfred Leone takes credit for reviving Cotten's career; however, 1971's THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES was actually made and released before BARON BLOOD.) The Bava biography provides a quick, entertaining guide to a man who deserves more credit than he's ever received.

—Chris Workman

THE BRUTE MAN
Image Entertainment
DVD, \$19.99

The opening titles of THE BRUTE MAN (1946) give way to the police responding to a murder! A quick cut as The Creeper, a disfigured giant, makes his



getaway. The police car tears around the corner of a darkened street. A quick dis-

solve to The Creeper lurking in the shadows as he stumbles upon a victory celebration for a local college sports event. Spotted through the window, The Creeper's monstrous features shock and terrify the festive students inside. Moving on, he approaches a mansion and hides in the bushes as the hostess bids her guests good-bye. Once alone with her, he identifies himself as Hal Moffat, a name she recognizes. But when he steps into the light, she can't believe her eyes! He lunges at her and kills her!

It's an action-packed opening and director Jean Yarbrough continues the pace throughout this 58-minute thriller. The Creeper was once a college football star (as was the actor who played him, Rondo Hatton, before coming down with the disease acromegaly), but now he seeks revenge on those he holds responsible for the accident that caused his deformity. He befriends a blind girl (played by gorgeous Jane Adams) and tries to help her financially so that she can have an operation to restore her sight. The Creeper ruthlessly kills everyone in his path and stays one step ahead of the police the whole time.

Tom Neal and Jan Wiley also star in this final Creeper tale (the name, though not necessarily the same character, appears in the 1944 Sherlock Holmes film THE PEARL OF DEATH and 1946's HOUSE OF HORRORS), released in 1946 by PRC six months after Hatton's death. (The film was a Universal production, sold to PRC when the studio opted to concentrate on more "high-tone" projects.) The photography and art direction are above average, giving this programmer the ambiance of a creepy film noir.

Disappointingly, the DVD lacks any special features except for scene selection capability. Still, what it lacks in extras it makes up for in sheer novelty. THE BRUTE MAN more than adequately fills the gap between waves of classic Universal monster DVD releases.

—Todd Livingston

CURSE OF THE VOODOO
Elite Entertainment
DVD, \$24.95

Elite's DVD release of CURSE OF THE VOODOO (1965) represents the title's American home video debut. Director Lindsay Shonteff and star Bryant Haliday followed their previous collaboration, 1963's scary DEVIL DOLL, with this pot-boiler about a bedeviled Great White Hunter. Mike Stacey (Haliday) kills a lion while conducting an African safari. Trouble is, his party is in the domain of the Simbaza, a lion-worshipping tribe. In short order, the atmosphere becomes charged with the vibrations of angry drums. Stacey is symbolically warned about his transgression at spearpoint.

That thread might have resulted in a passable adventure yarn. Instead, the hunter returns to London in pursuit of his estranged wife, Janet (Lisa Daniely), reducing the drama to a dull domestic chronicle. Between episodes of marital

discord and a brief acquaintance with a barfly (Valli Newby), Stacey does suffer a few visions of Simbaza warriors, but he never appears to be in any genuine danger. The sounds of lions, for example, are explained away as emanating from a nearby zoo. Once the audience realizes that the menacing natives aren't even in London, the screenplay has lost its ability to drum up any tension.

Janet consults a black anthropologist (Louis Mahoney) who theorizes that her husband is being communally "prayed to death" from the Dark Continent. This conversation signifies the film's only attempt to explore the mysticism of the Simbaza. The discussion itself is more arresting than any of the repetitive images of tribal dancing and spear brandishing,



but that level of interest dissipates when Stacey returns to Africa to kill his persecutors. As played by Haliday, the man is simply a dour-countenanced nonentity, so the audience has little stake in what befalls him.

CURSE OF THE VOODOO suffers from inconsistent production quality. The opening voice-over narrator pompously intones "... all who sin against their Gods" to the visual accompaniment of stock-footage hippos romping through a river. Brian Fahey's John Barryesque score labors to contribute a sense of grandeur, but only dwarfs the picture's low-budget ambience. Stacey's climactic shooting of the tribesmen falls flat (assuming that one is even cheering for him), as his gun doesn't appear to be actually firing during the barrage. A nicely photographed hallucination sequence, in which he is chased through an English park by two Simbaza, is dependent on a dubious dynamic: the warriors don't really appear to want to overtake him,

and he in turn never really strives to further distance himself from them. Dream-like perhaps, but hardly thrilling.

The film doesn't suggest the understated eloquence of Val Lewton's *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* (1943), nor is it as unabashedly trashy as Douglas Fowley's *MACUMBA LOVE* (1960). Its hero is simply a dullard, much less entertaining than the two-fisted he-man playboy (Tom Harris, as portrayed by William Joyce) who swaggers into the face of peril in Del Tenney's *I EAT YOUR SKIN* (1964/71). *CURSE OF THE VODOO* seems like a less inspired effort when compared to the filmmakers' previous *DEVIL DOLL*.

The DVD presents the full-length 83-minute version that includes a suggestive four-minute dance often cut from TV prints, although the packaging approximates the running time as 77 minutes. The source material is somewhat dark, with mediocre black and white contrasts. Other than a few speckles near the beginning, the image is in satisfactory condition for a work of this vintage and budget. No visual information has been sacrificed by the standard 1:33-1 aspect ratio. The disc contains no supplements, but the viewer does get to employ a spearhead icon to flip between the pages of chapter headings.

—John F. Black

BROKEN BLOSSOMS
Image Entertainment
DVD, \$24.95

The confluence of technical innovation, narrative fluency, and Victorian sensibility that pervades D. W. Griffith's work reached a collective peak in *THE BIRTH OF A NATION* (1915). The subsequent commercial failure of *INTOLERANCE* (1916) weakened Griffith's position as an independent producer, but didn't prevent him from directing another 21 features between 1918 and 1931. Arguably the filmmaker's last classic, *BROKEN BLOSSOMS* (1919) proved Griffith's first major financial success since 1915.

Griffith adapted *BROKEN BLOSSOMS* from a story titled "The Chink and the



Child" in Thomas Burke's *Limehouse Nights*, a book brought to his attention by Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. The film relates the tale of Cheng Huan (Richard Barthelmess, referred to as "The Yellow Man" in the intertitles), a young Buddhist monk who emigrates to London's Limehouse district to preach peace,

only to succumb to the waterfront vices of gambling and opium. Fifteen-year-old Lucy (Lillian Gish) leads an even more pitiful existence as daughter of a sadistic, alcoholic prizefighter (Donald Crisp). After a savage beating at her father's hands, the waif collapses outside the monk's shop. Cheng Huan takes Lucy in and nurses her back to health, incurring the wrath of the racist, bullet-brained boxer.

Cheng Huan's saintlike characterization is presented to underscore the violence and insensitivity of Western culture. Nonetheless, Griffith took care not to include a scene from the book in which Cheng Huan kisses Lucy. Griffith may have chosen *BROKEN BLOSSOMS* as a vehicle to exonerate himself of charges of racism brought on by the Klan-boasting *THE BIRTH OF A NATION*. Despite the director's intentions, *BROKEN BLOSSOMS* betrays an implicitly imperialistic Orientalism, the myth of Asian culture as the embodiment of Victorian ideals.

Remarkably convincing in a role 10 years her junior, Lillian Gish's character identification appears total as the wretched, terrified child. A fade-to-black on Lucy as her abusive father beckons is as haunting as the darkest interludes of *TWIN PEAKS*.

While crosscutting may be Griffith's most significant contribution to the language of cinema, *BROKEN BLOSSOMS* sustains its air of pathos primarily through long, uninterrupted takes. The performances and narrative are strong enough to render the intertitles almost comically redundant: "Lucy, as usual, receives the Battler's pent up brutishness."

BROKEN BLOSSOMS was shot entirely in the studio. A \$88,000 budget allowed the construction of convincing Limehouse street and dock sets, styled after a series of watercolors by British artist George Baker. Cinematographer Billy Bitzer (with uncredited assistance from portrait photographer Hendrik Sartov, a specialist in soft-focus work) imparts the film with a hazy, impressionistic look.

This delicately tinted Blackhawk print (which includes the original illustrated title cards) is one of the better-preserved specimens of its era. The deep, dimensional shading of nitrate stock is captured by a transfer devoid of digital artifacts. Louis Gottschalk's 1919 orchestral score (from a theme whistled by Griffith) borders on the mawkish, but its inclusion enhances the authenticity of this presentation.

—Michael Draine

DEVIL BAT'S DAUGHTER
Image Entertainment
DVD, \$19.99

There aren't more than a handful of legendarily awful films that are truly as bad as they are supposed to be—and while *DEVIL BAT'S DAUGHTER* (1946) may not be quite in that select league, it ain't far from it. The great forties wave of trash horror was in its last stages when producer/director Frank Wisbar, who had made the transcendent *STRANGLER OF*

THE SWAMP the previous year, found himself with this late-in-the-day death-rattle Thanksgiving dinner on his plate. Directorially, the film isn't that bad. The central performance by Rosemary LaPlanche (okay, so she has shoulders that suggest she could go best two falls out of three with Frank Moran) is pretty credible. (That's no mean feat, given lines like, "Bats! Bats! My father!") Molly Lamont is quite good in an unusually sympathetic role. However, there's this script by Griffin Jay, who had been involved with such Universal offerings as *THE MUMMY'S HAND* (1940), *THE MUMMY'S TOMB* (1942), and *CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN* (1943), along with Columbia's *RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE* (1943) and *CRY OF THE WEREWOLF* (1944). What-



ever Jay's contributions to that variable list may have been, here he penned something that is just plain bad—and seems to have driven him from screenwriting—though, in all fairness, the storyline he inherited from Wisbar, Leo J. McCarthy, and Ernest Jaeger has a lot to do with it.

Apparently PRC, who started the bottom-of-the-barrel horror wave with *THE DEVIL BAT* (1941), wanted a sequel to their original hit. Fine, except that they had no Bela Lugosi and could only come up with a tale that completely rewrote the events of the first film! All the wonderful villainy that Bela performed in *DEVIL BAT* was swept aside and his "kindly" Dr. Carruthers was transformed into a genius in the realm of "glandular stimulation" (or "stimoolation" as Bela said it), whose death was a blow to science! Worse, local legend now has it that the doc was a vampire! With this questionable back story, we're given a tepid mystery with a transparent villain who is Gaslighting Carruthers' daughter into thinking *herself* a prowling bloodsucker.

Oddly, there are a couple of good moments amid all the waste, and the production values are surprisingly good. For those moments and for a glimpse of PRC's last horror picture, *DEVIL BAT'S DAUGHTER* deserves a look by connoisseurs of the junk of the time—but it also deserves a better transfer than Image gives us. What they appear to have done is saddled up an old NTA TV print and slapped it onto a DVD. The results are predictably unthrilling and the soundtrack is an abomination. Alexander Steinert's score (which hints at being delightfully bombastic and occasionally inept) is so distorted that it might have been recorded on an Edison cylinder. It is, in fact, the worst sound I've ever heard on a DVD release. This may be the definitive version of the film, though, so if completists can find it at a good price, it may be worth the investment.

—Ken Hanke

LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM

Pioneer/Artisan
DVD, \$29.99

Unlock the doors, and lock up the chambermaids! That zany cinematic madman, Ken Russell, has unleashed yet another threat to humanity—this time in the form of a carnivorous worm!

There's some strange happenings in D'Ampton. There's a young Scots archaeology student who happens to be named Angus Flint (Peter Capaldi), renting bed, breakfast, and permission to dig up a farm run by two sisters who happen to be named Mary (Sammi Davis) and Eve (Catherine Oxenberg)—a farm which happens to be the site of an 11th-century convent where pagan, snake-worshipping Roman soldiers raped and slaughtered Christian nuns! What's more, the farm is owned by a dashing young British Air Force officer who happens to be the descendant of a legendary knight who long ago slew the local dragon, the D'Ampton Worm, a beast which happens to be worshipped by the prettiest gal in town! Curiouser and curiouser!

Flint unearths a giant skull in the farmyard. He believes the skull is somehow connected to a "rebel" Roman emperor who ruled the area in 1086, when the region was known as Mercia. (Coins found on the site bearing the Emperor's image depict on the tails-side a giant snakelike creature coiled around a cross.) That night, while accompanying Mary to a party, Angus is introduced to Officer James D'Ampton (Hugh Grant), landlord of the Trent farm and descendant of worm-slaying Sir John D'Ampton, who saved the town by cutting the Worm in half. ("But what happens when you cut a worm in half?")

On a moonlit walk home through a wooded grove with her "brave Scotch lad," Mary unloads her life's story: Last summer, her parents disappeared without a trace while walking home through this very grove, leaving her and Eve not only orphaned, but burdened with running the farm. Mary's previous boyfriend

(apparently sensing the looming danger of responsibility and commitment) "killed hisself on a motorbike . . . daft bugger." (Luck floweth like a fountain from this family!) Eve's an item with James, but he's rarely around, so they're pretty much playing "Happy Families" on their own. Angus' sympathy for her sad plight wins him a kiss from Mary, but the moment is interrupted by the appearance of a mysterious vehicle driving through the grove without headlights.

When Angus and Mary get back to the farmhouse, they're greeted by Erny (Paul Brooke), the village's cock-eyed Police Constable. He presents Mary with her father's pocket watch, found during an excavation of Stonerick Cavern, the supposed lair of the D'Ampton worm. After R.S.V.P.-ing for tomorrow's excavation, Mary reports the strange car, seemingly headed toward Temple House, which by rights should still be locked up for winter.

"Bang goes another early night," says Erny, and he heads over to Temple House to investigate. Watching the house, he's bitten by a snake, just as the house's owner, the smashing Lady Sylvia Marsh (Amanda Donohoe), comes 'round to see who's been snooping on her property. She's kind enough to suck the poison from Erny's wound (without even being so impolite as to spit afterward!), and even more kindly decides to pay a consolatory visit to the farm. The next day, discovering the Trent house empty, Lady Sylvia goes upstairs and not only purloins Angus' giant skull, but sprouts fangs and spits venom on the family crucifix! Later, on her way home, this serpentine seductress picks up a hitchhiking Boy Scout (Chris Pitt) on the way home, bathes him, and implants her insatiable incisors into his . . . um, Ipswitch!

Well, good, clean-living kids like Eve, James, Mary and Angus can't abide such scandalous behavior in their village. (It certainly wouldn't look good in the society pages!) And if they're to avoid becoming snake food themselves, they must unravel the mystery of Lady Sylvia, and Temple House, and Erny's snakebite, and the *LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM* (1988).

Bram Stoker's little-known final novel of the same name was published in 1911, a year before the author's death. Written



in the throes of Bright's disease, Stoker's increasing madness showed through in the narrative, which is hallucinogenic and often disjointed, showing little of the continuity or strict attention to detail seen in *Dracula* (1897).

Given near-carte blanche (within the extremely limited budgets) with a three-picture deal with Vestron, Ken Russell takes Stoker's Edwardian spook show for a joyride on the backs of the director's trademark entourage of nuns, hallucinations, and sexual innuendo. With the simple excuse that the book depicts electric lights in use half a century before the light bulb's invention, Russell updates the story not only in setting, but attitude. The film unfolds in an intentionally serpentine fashion, with smooth visual and audio segues from one scene to the next, and the script is a multilayered smorgasbord of puns, double entendre, and word games.

And phalluses? You betcha. Easily Russell's most dick-happy film since the blatantly phallic *LISZTOMANIA* (1975), the film abounds with protrusions, penetrations, and puncturous pointers with strapped-on delight (though members of the Raincoat Brigade'll be a bit idlehanded—it's not that type of film, folks). The cast gives a fine, enthusiastic go at the material (though Oxenberg's dialogue is semi-annoyingly redubbed by another, uncredited actress), particularly Stratford Johns as John D'Ampton's wild-eyed, ribald butler. (Keep an eye out for Russell alumni Christopher Gable and Imogen Claire in cameo roles.) Alternately creepy, clever, and downright outrageous, it's easy to see why this is Russell's favorite of the Vestron trilogy (released between

1987's *SALOME'S LAST DANCE* and 1989's *THE RAINBOW*).

The filmmaker's pride in his work shows in the delightfully enthusiastic audio commentary provided on Artisan's excellent DVD (their second release of a Russell film with commentary, after *SALOME*). Russell candidly rambles through the film like he's chatting up an old mate over a pint (or five) at the local. Demonstrating his brilliantly dry humor, he gives insight into the film's production (being a rather lazy man, Russell chose to shoot Mary and Angus' moonlight walk in his own garden, lit through his kitchen window!) while providing hysterical zingers. (Implying that no special effects were used for Donohoe's venom-spraying, he quips, "She's quite a bitchy lady at times, and venom springs readily to her lips.") As quick to point out *LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM*'s weaknesses as he is to brag (in a singularly annoying fashion), the commentary is one that can be enjoyed repeatedly.

Presented in its proper 1.85:1 aspect ratio, the transfer is bright, colorful, crisp—everything the film's previous home-video incarnations weren't. In addition to the commentary, the extras include reading material on both the novel and the film, production photos, a theatrical trailer (plus one for *SALOME*), and a TV spot. One only wishes the usual DVD language/subtitle options would have been 'round to help with some of the thicker accents, but this oversight is no reason to avoid stopping in for a bite. Still, as the picture's ad campaign campily puts it, "Watch out for your asp!"

—Tony Strauss

THE PINK PANTHER
A SHOT IN THE DARK
THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN
REVENGE OF THE PINK PANTHER
MGM Home Entertainment
RETURN OF THE PINK PANTHER
Artisan Home Entertainment
DVD, \$24.98 each

He was the world's greatest bumbling detective: stepping on many a foot, missing every clue, and falling into more trouble than the criminals he pursued. He skewered the simplest of words with a terrible accent while fooling no one with his hilariously ineffective disguises. He was Clouseau.

He first stumbled onto the screen in *THE PINK PANTHER* (1963), a creation of the combined talents of actor Peter Sellers and writer/director Blake Edwards. This comic variation on such jewel-heist films as Alfred Hitchcock's *TO CATCH A THIEF* (1955) concerns the Pink Panther, a fabulous diamond owned by a princess (Claudia Cardinale) and sought after by the Phantom, Sir Charles Litton (David Niven). Clouseau, who refers to his quarry as "Sir Charles Phantom, the notorious Litton" is determined to capture him at any cost—though he's completely oblivious to the machinations of his own wife (Capucine), who is the Phantom's lover/

accomplice. Despite a lack of screen time, Sellers' (in a role originally slated for Peter Ustinov) won raves and spawned several sequels.

A SHOT IN THE DARK (1964) put Sellers front and center as the inept Inspector Jacques Clouseau, this time madly in love with a blonde maid (Elke Sommer) whose beauty is surpassed only by the number of dead bodies found near her every curve. The film is unique in the series for



three reasons. First, it's a sequel based on a theatrical play completely unrelated to the first *PINK PANTHER*—Harry Kurnitz's adaptation of Marcel Achard's *L'IDIOTE*. Second, it makes no reference to the Panther at all, either in the film or in the title sequence (a tradition fans grew to love and expect). Third, it is far better and funnier than its predecessor, a rare occurrence among sequels. This can be attributed to the addition of series regulars Chief Inspector Dreyfus (Herbert Lom) and Kato (Burt Kwouk), as well as the superb script by Blake Edwards and William Peter Blatty. Also adding his share of the comedy is Graham Stark as Hercule, Clouseau's unflappable assistant.

After a hiatus of over a decade, *THE RETURN OF THE PINK PANTHER* (1975) reunited Clouseau, Dreyfuss, and Kato, while turning over the role of the Phantom to Christopher Plummer. The film also resurrected the trademark title sequence involving the Pink Panther himself. (After the first film, he'd been spun off into his own cartoon series by animators David Depatie and Friz Freleng.) While Sellers, Lom, and Kwouk are in good form, Plummer is oddly miscast in the role previously played by David Niven. Pay him no mind and instead be on the lookout for Graham Stark. He never reprised his role of Hercule, but played various small parts in the rest of the Panther film series.

THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN (1976) boasts the most enjoyable title sequence ever with its Panther homage to Hitchcock, Batman, Dracula, and King Kong scored by maestro Henry Mancini. The storyline is equally enjoyable, following the mad schemes of Dreyfus as he seeks to destroy the world unless it destroys Clouseau. Herbert Lom actually garners more laughs than Sellers, whose funniest moments are his legendary skirmishes with the sneak-attacking Kato. Humorous horror homages abound, including a classic sci-fi vaporizing ray gun

and Dreyfus' Phantom of the Opera bit at the organ (Lom played the role in Terence Fisher's 1962 Hammer Film version). The creative team pulls out all the stops to end on a high note, which the film certainly does.

Unfortunately, Blake Edwards and United Artist must have felt pressured to go to the well too often, as witness the noticeably unfunny and easily forgettable titles that followed: *REVENGE OF THE PINK PANTHER* (1978, and the last to actually star Sellers), *TRAIL OF THE PINK PANTHER* (1982, containing outtakes of the series' late star), *CURSE OF THE PINK PANTHER* (1983), and *SON OF THE PINK PANTHER* (1993).

The widescreen DVDs of the first five titles in the series are sharper and clearer than their laser and VHS counterparts. Each disc also contains a trailer, an eight-page booklet containing background information and anecdotes, and plenty of chapter stops so you can easily find your favorite attack scenes with Kato.

—Michael D. Walker

CHARADE
The Criterion Collection
DVD, \$39.95

The year was 1962, and movie director Stanley Donen—whose credits covered everything from stylish musicals to sophisticated comedies—was yearning to try his hand at a different kind of screen thriller.

"I just wanted to do a movie where the leading lady was the one who was being chased instead of the man," Donen explains in the delightful DVD commentary for his 1963 classic *CHARADE*.

Around the same time, young, up-and-coming writer Peter Stone developed an idea for a witty, suspenseful thriller along the lines of Alfred Hitchcock's 1959 mas-



terwork, *NORTH BY NORTHWEST*. Aiming high, Stone sought to recruit Hollywood heavyweights Cary Grant (who had starred in the Hitchcock hit) and Audrey Hepburn for the romantic leading

roles. Although the project overcame a number of near-devastating hurdles (Donen even toyed with replacing Grant and Hepburn with relative youngsters Warren Beatty and Natalie Wood), the dynamic team of Donen and Stone finally joined forces and secured their glamorous, ideally matched stars.

The creative duo then assembled a stalwart supporting cast and recruited other top-notch screen artists (particularly composer Henry Mancini and title artist Maurice Binder) before journeying to Paris to create one of the screen's most deliciously tasty comedy/mysteries.

"It interested me as a genre," Stone notes in his own lively contribution to the DVD commentary track, "to do suspense and menace side-by-side with comedy."

A triumph when released to theaters—and clearly Grant's last superb starring role—CHARADE has popped up on television and home video over the years in a distressing array of poorly duped, pan-and-scan prints. The Criterion Collection recently released the definitive edition in a classy new DVD package highlighted by a fascinating, enlightening, and hysterically funny commentary track by the warmly bickering Donen (now 76) and Stone (who's 70).

Acknowledging their debt to Hitchcock, Donen and Stone fashioned a first-rate thriller about an American diplomatic interpreter (Hepburn) pursued in Paris by three colorfully murderous thugs (character actors James Coburn, George Kennedy, and Ned Glass). After her husband has been murdered, Hepburn's Regina Lampert learns that her seemingly colorless mate led a sinister double life. The husband and his three unsavory associates apparently stole \$250,000 during wartime. Now the survivors of this covert conspiracy are willing to do anything to recover their share of the loot.

Hepburn's only allies—or so it seems—are a CIA official (Walter Matthau) and a suave, mysterious stranger (Grant, of course) who may or may not be her guardian angel.

Filled with flourishes of European elegance, macabre humor, and surprising plot twists (with Grant playing his most deliciously ambiguous role since Hitchcock's SUSPICION, way back in 1941), CHARADE is a clever, charming, endlessly engaging thriller. The Criterion Collection loads the CHARADE DVD with tons of enticing features—from the gorgeous widescreen transfer and the original theatrical trailer to filmographies of Donen and Stone and liner notes by Criterion scholar Bruce Elder.

"You write a mystery to be seen a second time," Stone explains. "If someone looks at it a second time and says it's a cheat, then you haven't made it right."

Stone and Donen did it right, and they did it with style, wit, and elegance. Thirty-seven years later, CHARADE grows more and more captivating with each successive viewing.

—Terry Pace

KISS OF THE VAMPIRE Image Entertainment DVD, \$24.99

After the great success of HORROR OF DRACULA in 1958, Hammer was quick to realize the potential a sequel might have in tearing up the box office. Jimmy Sangster, who had already penned several of the company's biggest hits, began work on DRACULA II. The film was never made, but elements of Sangster's script were incorporated into three other Hammer projects: THE BRIDES OF DRACULA (1960), KISS OF THE VAMPIRE (1962), and DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS (1965).

KISS OF THE VAMPIRE begins in sinister territory as a funeral procession makes its way through a turn-of-the-century Bavarian village. The drunken Professor Zimmer (Clifford Evans) watches quietly, awaiting the moment he might run a spade through his vampire daughter's heart. Unfortunately, little in the remaining movie, which concerns a honeymooning British couple (Edward De Souza and Jennifer Daniel) traveling across Europe and encountering the vampiric Dr. Ravana (Noel Willman) and his two children (Jacquie Wallis and Barry Warren), lives up to its opening moments. Evans is no better here than he was in Terence Fisher's THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF (1961), and De Souza as husband/hero Gerald is his usual stiff self. The film has its moments—Zimmer performing a Satanic ritual to reverse the powers of darkness; vampires uncharacteristically clad in white, slaughtered by bats—but Don Sharp isn't the director to bring an otherwise dialogue-heavy film to life. William K. Everson, in his 1986 book *More Classics of the Horror Film*, called this minor cult film a remake of Universal's challenging classic THE BLACK CAT (1934). It's a statement that's been seconded by many a critic since, though there's little actual truth in it. There are some surface similarities (a honeymooning couple held in thrall by a Satanist who desires the woman), but nothing more. On the other hand, Stanley Kubrick's EYES WIDE SHUT (1999) bears more than a passing resemblance to KISS OF THE VAMPIRE, particularly if one considers the sexual subtext inherent in vampire stories. The main set-piece of KISS is a masquerade ball in which the vampire partygoers wear frightening masks and dance to classical music. It's during this party that the heroine (Jennifer Daniel) is abducted and her preliminary initiations into the cult of vampirism begin. The next day, in a groggy state of hangover, Gerald cannot find anyone who will admit that such a party even took place, let alone that he had a wife.

When the film was shown on American television, it was retitled KISS OF EVIL and had some of its scarier moments stripped away and replaced by footage shot at Universal. (The same fate befell Hammer's 1962 remake of THE PHAN-

TOM OF THE OPERA and 1964's THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN.) It would have been interesting to see this alternate version on the flip side of the DVD for comparison purposes. (The KISS OF EVIL trailer was included on Universal/MCA's laserdisc.) And that's not the only thing this disc is missing: as the credits roll, James Bernard's score eschews his "Dracula" theme for a more somber and piano-heavy concerto. If only Image or Universal had reworked the film's superior soundtrack and separated the score on a



music and effects-only track. At least the bright colors are richly transferred, particularly during the orgiastic masquerade, and the movie is letterboxed at its original 1.66:1 aspect ratio. There's little else about this disc to recommend it.

—Chris Workman

THE KENNEL MURDER CASE/ NANCY DREW, REPORTER The Roan Group DVD, \$29.95

Between 1928 and 1947, a series of mysteries featuring S. S. Van Dine's dilettante sleuth Philo Vance appeared on the screen, from several studios (Paramount, Warners Bros., and PRC among them) and with a variety of Vances (including Basil Rathbone, Warren William, and Alan Curtis). By far the most popular actor in the role was William Powell, and his THE KENNEL MURDER CASE (1933), directed by Michael Curtiz for Warner Bros., was easily the best picture. A year later, Powell's Vance was eclipsed by his Nick Charles in THE THIN MAN (1934), but KENNEL remains an imaginative, fast-paced whodunit with a clever plot and an impressive cast of coppers (Eugene Pallette, Robert McWade) and suspects (Mary Astor, Ralph Morgan, Paul Cavanagh, Jack La Rue).

The Roan Group's DVD release of THE KENNEL MURDER CASE is on a par with their superb laserdisc pressing (reviewed in *Scarlet Street* #31), but here they've twin-billed the film with a considerably more appropriate cofeature, NANCY DREW, REPORTER, starring Bonita Granville as Carolyn Keene's popular girl detective. (The laser opted for the Michael Curtiz connection, pairing KENNEL with the 1940 Errol Flynn oater SANTA FE TRAIL.) Teamed with future television Space Cadet Frankie Thomas as long-suffering boyfriend Ted Nickerson, Gran-



ville starred for Warners in four Drew mysteries before the studio pulled the plug on the series. (A pity, since all four films are well-mounted, breezy stories.) The star is a veritable bundle of energy, fast-talking and enthusiastic in her pursuit of a killer, but it takes a little effort to forget that she played that treacherous, lying little . . . snitch in *THESE THREE* (1936), Sam Goldwyn's lesbian-free film version of Lillian Hellman's *THE CHILDREN'S HOUR*.

NANCY DREW, REPORTER doesn't offer too terribly deep a mystery to solve. It isn't so much a whodunit, in fact, as it is a how's-she-gonna-save-her, with Nancy, hoping to get a scoop for the town paper, doing her galvanic best to clear pretty Eula Denning (Betty Amann) of a trumped-up murder rap. The junior-miss shamus is aided and abetted by the frequently embarrassed Ted and her bemused D.A. dad, Carson Drew (John Litel), and seriously hampered by Ted's kid sister, Mary (Mary Lee), and her pal, Killer Parkins (Dickie Jones), a pint-sized Dead End Kid. (Lee, a singer whose style was pleasantly similar to early Garland, was a veteran of several Gene Autry Westerns. Jones, who also toiled for the singing cowboy throughout a lengthy career—he made his last film in 1965, 31 years after his first—achieved lasting fame as the voice of a little wooden boy in the 1940 Disney classic, *PINOCCHIO*.)

THE KENNEL MURDER CASE and *NANCY DREW, REPORTER* are a perfect pairing for a pleasant evening of light-hearted sleuthing. Sit back, relax, and feast on some delightful red herrings.

—Drew Sullivan

THE BIG SLEEP Warner Bros. DVD, \$19.98

A famous, funny Hollywood story surrounds the making of *THE BIG SLEEP*, the 1946 movie version of Raymond Chandler's prototypical 1939 detective novel. With variations here and there, the tall tale usually runs something like this:

Filming the scene in which police find a murdered chauffeur's body, Humphrey Bogart (playing Chandler's tough, smart, incorruptible private eye, Philip Marlowe)

confessed to director Howard Hawks: "I can't figure it out—who killed this guy?"

Hawks proved to be equally baffled, so he turned the conundrum over to screenwriters Jules Furthman, Leigh Brackett, and William Faulkner. When they couldn't penetrate the puzzle, Hawks telegraphed Chandler, who simply cabled back: "The butler did it."

Admirers of *THE BIG SLEEP* can appreciate Chandler's droll dismissal of the issue. Within its twisted labyrinth of murder, blackmail, sex, gambling, pornography, and other forms of degradation, *THE BIG SLEEP* is so supremely entertaining that its indecipherable plot makes little difference. An electrifying example of forties *film noir*, Hawks' *BIG SLEEP* actually exists in two distinctly different versions. The cut released to theaters in 1946 (and seen ever since) is justifiably hailed as a masterpiece. However, the earlier, lesser-known cut merits attention of its own. Both versions of *THE BIG SLEEP* are now available on a special-edition DVD, where movie buffs can compare and contrast (with the help of an excellent step-by-step documentary hosted by UCLA preservation officer Robert Gitt) the movie's fascinating evolution into a Hollywood classic.

Filmed in 1944-45, *THE BIG SLEEP* reunited Bogart and Lauren Bacall, Hawks' stars in *TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT* (1944), in the hope of reigniting their siz-



zling chemistry. Following *TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT*, Bacall had appeared in a commercial and critical flop, the Graham Greene espionage thriller *CONFIDENTIAL AGENT* (1945). When her agent, Charles K. Feldman, viewed the finished version of *THE BIG SLEEP*—which Warner Bros. held back for a post-war release—he feared more scathing notices. In late 1945, Feldman urged studio chief Jack Warner to cut certain scenes (including Bacall's deadeningly drab "veil scene") and shoot new ones with the charismatic stars (who had since mar-

ried). With uncanny instinct, Feldman suggested that the new footage play up the "insolent and provocative nature" of Bacall's screen debut.

"In *TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT*, Bacall was more insolent than Bogart," Feldman wrote to Warner. "This very insolence endeared her in both the public's and the critics' minds. It was something startling and new."

Hawks made changes in seven of the 12 *BIG SLEEP* reels. The alterations involved the addition of scintillating, sexually charged dialogue between the stars (the movie is deservedly celebrated for its juicy double entendres) and the elimination of key expository dialogue that explains the intricate plot. "Actually, we didn't care," Hawks later told film historian Joseph McBride. "It was the first time I made a picture and just decided I wasn't going to explain things. I was just going to try and make good scenes. It's my way of telling a story."

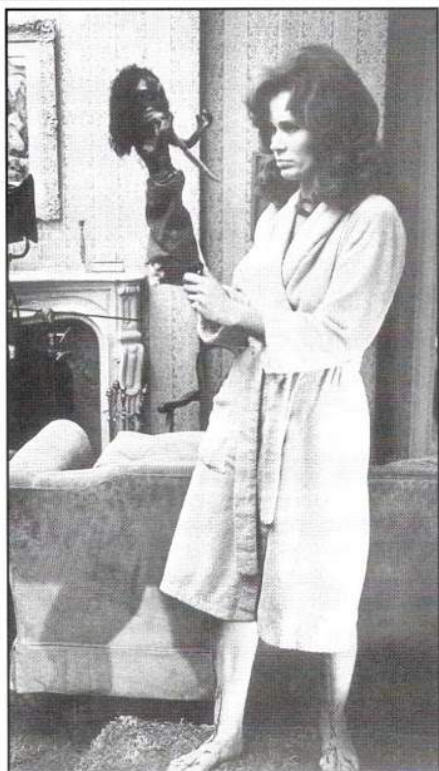
The release of *THE BIG SLEEP* on DVD allows movie buffs to enjoy two sides of a crisp, compelling, well-told tale.

—Terry Pace

TRILOGY OF TERROR Anchor Bay DVD, \$24.98

If you were alive and alert back in March of 1975, chances are you remember seeing or hearing fellow workers or students discussing "that movie with Karen Black and the doll." That movie, a television feature in fact, was *TRILOGY OF TERROR*, a triple bill of tales of the macabre all directed by Dan Curtis, adapted from stories by Richard Matheson, and each starring Karen Black. The final installment, entitled "Amelia," from a Matheson story called "Prey," is the one with the "doll." This justifiably famous segment made *TRILOGY* a ratings winner at the time and has kept this otherwise ordinary presentation alive for fans of horror and the bizarre. There are, however, two other segments which hardly anyone bothers to mention, perhaps because they are more akin to what one might have expected from a typical offering on ABC's *MOVIE OF THE WEEK*.

Story One, entitled "Julie," presents Black as a seemingly repressed, shy teacher on whom Chad Foster, a lecherous student (Robert Burton, Black's real-life husband at the time), sets his sights. Teacher and pupil wind up at a drive-in movie (playing Curtis' 1971 telefeature *THE NIGHT STALKER*—in black-and-white no less!), where the sleazy Chad goes so far as to drug poor Julie's soda pop in order to have his way with her. Checking into a motel as Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Harker, the morally repulsive student snaps compromising photos of the drugged Julie and proceeds to rape her. Although attention is held throughout this episode, the twist revelation happens almost too quickly, as though footage were missing from the buildup. It's the kind of story that's more satisfying in theory than presentation.



Story Two, "Millicent and Therese," allows Black to play two parts. One is a puritanical and rather unhinged spinster named Millicent, who writes down all sorts of horrible things in her diary about her sluttish and evil sibling, Therese, whom she accuses not only of having seduced their father when she was but 16, but having killed their mother. As played by Black, Therese is indeed a sultry babe, with tight dresses, long blonde hair, and a flirtatious manner, which she tries out on the family doctor (George Gaynes) without much success. Although it is intriguing to see Black take on these contrasting roles, chances are viewers will guess the outcome long before it arrives.

This leaves Story Three to wrap things up marvelously. Black is a mother-dominated young woman eager to impress the new man in her life. To do this, she buys him a Zuni hunter fetish doll for his birthday. (Next time you are having trouble picking out a holiday gift for that hard-to-buy-for relative, keep this in mind.) After having read the accompanying scroll warning buyers that the ugly little spear-carrier will come to life should the chain around his neck come undone, Amelia goes off to make dinner and take a bath. Needless to say, the chain drops off the doll's neck and the fun begins. The sequence in which Amelia begins to suspect something's afoot (and about a foot high) is masterfully done. The poor woman begins to question her sanity, hearing scurrying noises in the living room, puzzling over the disappearance of a kitchen knife, and receiving a nasty prick while reaching under the couch. The doll, a monstrous little demon with a deadly set of dentures, a garbled speech pattern akin to that of the Tasmanian Devil, and

the speed of a gazelle, is a splendidly effective creation. As the terrified Amelia tries in vain to fend off knife jabs and teeth bites, the sequence revs up to maximum impact, giving the viewer a very fulfilling combination of nervous chills and giggle fits. And the final image of Black is unforgettable . . .

The DVD presentation is clear and clean, the commercial breaks closely edited so that they resemble your average fade-out. The box indicates that the film is rated "R," which is curious, in that it originally aired as is on prime time TV. There are chapter headings and, best of all, a 1998 interview with Black printed inside the accompanying booklet. Black talks about her initial disinterest in doing the project, the bargain she made to have her then-husband cast, her disdain for the horror genre, the foolishness she felt filming the Zuni doll sequence, her preference for science fiction, and her admiration for director Dan Curtis. No mention is made on the disc of Curtis' shameless attempt to revive the project over two decades later with the imaginatively titled TRILOGY OF TERROR 2. In this 1996 telefilm, Lysette Anthony took over for Karen Black, but the Zuni hunter was back in action, proving you can't keep a good fetish doll down.

—Barry Monush

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

Anchor Bay
DVD, \$24.98

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS (1971) is a delightful romp, which Universal cut down to 88 minutes before releasing it as the bottom half of a double bill with another underrated film, Peter Fonda's THE HIRED HAND.

Released to television, THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS had several minutes restored, most of which take place in an all-night grocery store. This is the print that Anchor Bay has lovingly restored and re-



leased, with an interesting commentary track by director Anthony Harvey and film archivist Robert A. Harris.

The basic plot concerns retired judge Justin Playfair (George C. Scott, then at the height of his acting prowess), who, af-

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ter his wife's death, retreats into madness and the belief that he is the world's first consulting detective: Sherlock Holmes. Playfair's brother, Blevin (Lester Rawlins), wants to have him committed in order to get his hands on the family fortune. Unfortunately, the doctor brought in to examine Playfair is none other than Dr. Watson (Joanne Woodward), which does little but add fuel to the fire of Playfair's delusions. Watson reluctantly falls under Playfair's spell, and they romp around New York, looking for imaginary (or are they) clues and meeting some delightful eccentrics (Jack Gilford, Rue McClanahan, F. Murray Abraham, Kitty Wynn, Paul Benedict), as they search for that elusive evil genius, Professor James Moriarty.

Harvey and screenwriter James Goldman, who had just come off the success of their masterpiece, *THE LION IN WINTER* (1968), chose *THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS* as their next project, bringing it to Paul Newman's company, which got it off the ground. The picture was filmed during a garbage strike, with the Big Apple never looking dirtier. (Obviously, the sanitation department—run by Moriarty?—had it in for Sherlock Holmes. It was a garbage strike that helped close the Broadway musical *BAKER STREET*, as theatergoers were afraid of the contamination littering the streets.)

It's a small, quirky film, an unlikely romance between two unlikely people, and when Universal got involved they obviously didn't know what to do with it. One need only watch the theatrical trailer included on this DVD to realize that the studio threw in everything but the kitchen sink to catch the public's interest, while at the same time telling them absolutely nothing about the story.

Also included are brief talent bios of Scott, Woodward, and Harvey, and a quirky featurette haphazardly designed to publicize the film. It would have been nice to have a separate music track for John Barry's marvelous score, but that's just being greedy.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

THE BIRDS

Universal

DVD, \$29.98

Alfred Hitchcock's *THE BIRDS* (1963) depicts fowl attacks on mankind in picturesque Bodega Bay, a Northern California coastal town. Widow Lydia Brenner (Jessica Tandy) lives there with her 11-year-old daughter Cathy (Veronica Cartwright). Additionally, her adult son Mitch (Rod Taylor), a San Francisco attorney, returns home every weekend to stay with them. (The age difference of her two children implies that Lydia hasn't enjoyed a very regular sex life.) Her fear of being abandoned has resulted in her subtly controlling her son's interpersonal relationships.

Although she admonishes her daughter that, "In a democracy, Cathy, everyone is entitled to a fair trial," Lydia is loathe to extend that courtesy to Melanie Daniels

(Tippi Hedren), a San Francisco socialite who has surreptitiously followed Mitch to Bodega Bay on a lark. Clearly threatened by the interloper, Lydia maintains a



frosty demeanor. Unfortunately, the town suffers greater chaos when assorted species of birds begin assaulting the inhabitants. Following a particularly brutal onslaught, the Brenner family is forced to leave their home to transport the traumatized Melanie to a Bay Area hospital. Lydia's newly-found concern for Melanie's well being suggests that the older woman's egocentric personality has been transformed by the birds' disruption of her world.

Universal's DVD edition of *THE BIRDS* spotlights a pronounced improvement over previous transfers. Compared to existing full-frame VHS and television prints, the letterboxing (1:85-1) adds significant visual detail to the sides of the image without sacrificing information from the top or bottom. The color and fleshtones are also noticeably brighter. The DVD includes a bounty of supplemental features, including an 80-minute documentary, two newsreels, production photographs, and Hitch's witty trailer preview that offers lighthearted motivations for the bird attacks. (The finished film presents no such justifications.) There are two storyboard/script recreations; the first is a deleted scene in which Mitch and Melanie attempt to rationalize their bizarre plight, and the second is an unused alternate ending. However, there aren't any materials provided that illustrate the notorious concept of revealing the Golden Gate Bridge covered with birds at the climax.

The documentary contains interviews with many of the surviving cast and crew, some of whom remember certain bird actors by name. (Rod Taylor recalls running afoul of a raven named Archie.) It is a rare case of the participants in a film actually corroborating each other's anecdotes and stories. Intriguingly, it is scored with portions of two Bernard Herrmann compositions for Hitchcock's TV series. The overlapping of film clips with that background music provides a hint of how the film might have played with orchestral accompaniment rather than the noted electronic cacophonies.

—John F. Black

RETURN TO OZ

Anchor Bay Entertainment
DVD, \$24.98

The mid-eighties brought a flood of fantasy films to the silver screen from Jim Henson's family-focused *THE DARK CRYSTAL* (1983) and *LABYRINTH* (1986) to the dark, glorious wonders of Terry Gilliam's *TIME BANDITS* (1981) and *BRAZIL* (1985). However, on June 21, 1985, one of the best fantasy films of the decade quietly opened and very soon after quietly closed. A few months later, it was released as a rental video and soon after was put on moratorium. It has remained virtually unavailable until now. Anchor Bay has done a tremendous service to the genre fan by finally releasing, at a sell-thru price, Walt Disney's *RETURN TO OZ* (1985).

RETURN TO OZ is a glorious film to behold. This is the first live-action Oz film since Baum's own Oz series in the twenties to faithfully show the characters as described by the author and illustrated by John R. Neil. Ever since Judy Garland danced her way down the yellow-brick road in 1939, the characters of Baum's books have suffered the same cinematic injustice as Conan Doyle's Dr. Watson and Burroughs' Lord Greystoke. Garland and her fellow *THE WIZARD OF OZ* cast members, like Nigel Bruce and Johnny Weissmuller, so embodied their characters in the public mind that the public



would not accept any other portrayal. Unfortunately, these iconic characters were usually very unlike their literary originals. Critics in 1985 complained that *RETURN TO OZ* was a sequel to the 1939 film without songs, and questioned why Disney would cast a Dorothy that was several years younger than Judy Garland. The truth is that director Walter Murch made a sequel to the book (Disney didn't own the 1939 film) that faithfully cap-

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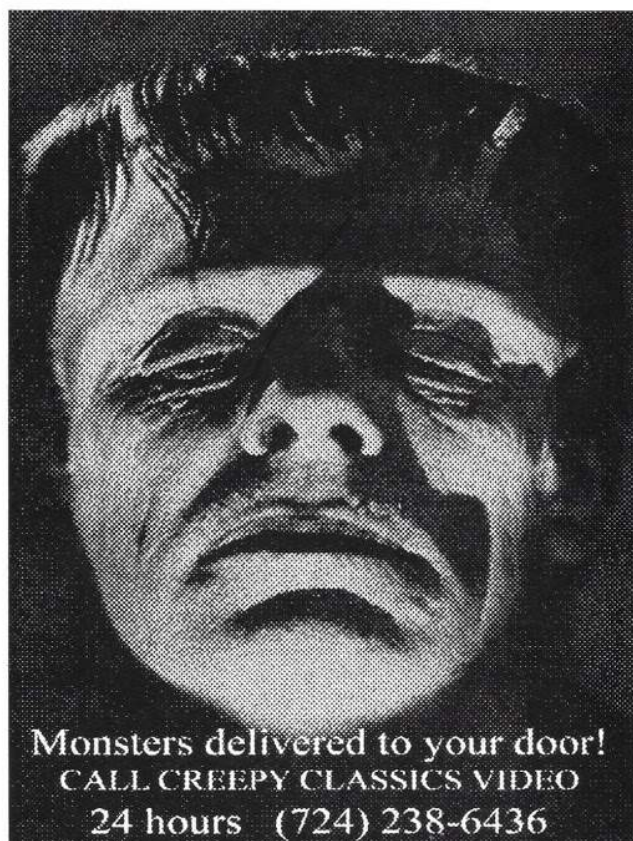
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 CASTLE OF THE LIVING DEAD (1963/CHRIS LEE/SP/\$10)
 COUNT YORGA, VAMPIRE (1970/ROBERT QUARRY/MGM/SP/\$15)
 DEAD MEN WALK (1943/ZUCCO AS VAMPIRE/FRYE/VCI/SP/\$15)
 DIE MONSTER DIE (1965/KARLOFF/MGM/SP/\$15)
 DR. ORLOFF'S MONSTER (1964/WEST GERMAN HORROR/CCV/SP/\$10)
 FOG ISLAND (1945/GEORGE ZUCCO-LIONEL ATWILL/LIB/\$15)
 THE 4D MAN (1959/SCI-FI CLASSIC/IMAGE/SP/\$20)
 FRANKENSTEIN & ME (1995/MONSTER BOOMER CLASSIC/VIDMARK/SP/\$15)
 FRENZY (1945/RARE GHOST STORY BRITISH FILM/CCV/SP/\$10)
 GALLERY OF HORRORS (1967/CHANEY-CARRADINE/SP/ENGLEWOOD/\$15)
 GARGOYLES (1972/ANCIENT HORROR/LIBERTY \$15)
 GHOSTS OF HANLEY HOUSE (1967/CCV/SP/\$10)
 THE GOLEM (1920/SILENT CLASSIC/TIMELESS/SP/\$15)
 THE GORILLA (1940/BELA LUGOSI/LIONEL ATWILL/CCV/\$10)
 THE H-MAN (1958/JAPANESE GLOBI/COLUMBIA/SP/\$20)
 HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM (1959/WIDESCREEN \$20/REGULAR \$15)
 HOUSE OF HAMMER TRAILERS (46 trailers! /SWV/\$20)
 HOUSE OF THE BLACK DEATH (CHANEY/CARRADINE/RHINO/SP/\$15)
 INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (1956/B & W/REPUBLIC/SP/\$20)
 INVASION USA (1952/COLD WAR SCI-FI/VCI/SP/\$15)
 THE INVISIBLE RAY (1936/KARLOFF-LUGOSI/MCA/\$15)
 IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE (1958/MGM/SP/\$15)
 JESSE JAMES MEETS FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER (1966/MGM/SP/\$15)
 THE LAST MAN ON EARTH (VINCENT PRICE/LIBERTY/\$15)
 THE MAD MONSTER (1942/ZUCCO & STRANGE/CTR/SP/\$10)
 MILL OF STOME WOMEN (1960/CREEEPEY/SWV/SP/\$20)
 MONSTERS WE'VE KNOWN & LOVED (1960's TV Documentary/CCV/\$15)
 THE OLD DARK HOUSE (1932/KARLOFF/KINO/SP/\$25)
 THE PHANTOM CREEPS (1939/COMPLETE LUGOSI SERIAL/2 TAPES/SP/\$20)
 RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE (1943/LUGOSI/COLUMBIA/SP/\$15)
 THE SHADOW - COMPLETE SERIAL (1940/VICTOR JORY/SP/2 TAPES/\$25)
 SLAUGHTER OF THE VAMPIRES (ITALIAN VAMPIRES!/1962/CTR/\$10)
 SON OF INGAGI (1940/APE-MAN-BEAST HIDDEN IN HOUSE/CCV/SP/\$10)
 SPACEWAYS (1953/HAMMER SCI-FI/ENGLEWOOD/SP/\$20)
 SUPERMAN AND THE MOLE MEN (1951/REEVES/WARNER/SP/\$15)
 SWORD & THE DRAGON (1956/A FEW LEFT! /VCI/SP/\$15)
 TARGETS (1968/BORIS KARLOFF/PAR/SP/\$15)
 THINGS HAPPEN AT NIGHT (1948/POLTERGEIST-GHOST MOVIE/CCV/SP/\$10)
 THE TWILIGHT PEOPLE (1972/ISLAND MONSTERS/SP/VCI/\$15)
 THE VAMPIRE PEOPLE (1966/EERIE OLD WORLD VAMPIRES/CCV/SP/\$10)
 VOYAGE TO A PREHISTORIC PLANET (1965/TIMELESS/SP/\$15)
 WEB OF THE SPIDER (1972/KLAUS KINSKI/TIMELESS/SP/\$15)
 WEREWOLF IN A GIRL'S DORMITORY (1962/VCI/SP/\$15)
 WEREWOLF OF LONDON (1935/HULL-OLAND/MCA/SP/\$15)
 THE ZACHERLY ARCHIVES (RARE HORROR HOST ZACH/SP/\$20)



DVDs:

THE BAT WHISPERS (1931/MILESTONE DVD/\$25)
BLACK SUNDAY (1960/BARBARA STEELE/EXTRAS!/\$20)
DRACULA & "SPANISH" DRACULA DBL. FEATURE (1931/MCA/\$25)
THE FLYING SERPENT (1943/GEORGE ZUCCO/IMAGE/DVD/\$20)
DESTROY ALL MONSTERS (1968/ADV DVD/\$15)
DEVIL GIRL FROM MARS (1954/IMAGE DVD/\$20)
DBL. FEATURE: THE GORILLA/NABONGA (ROAN/\$25)
DBL. FEATURE: CORPSE VANISHES/THE DEVIL BAT (ROAN/\$25)
DBL. FEATURE: THE BAT (1959)/HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL (\$25)
DBL. FEATURE: KING OF THE ZOMBIES/REVOLT OF ZOMBIES (\$25)
DBL. FEATURE: HUMAN MONSTER/MYSTERY LINER (ROAN \$25)
THE 4D MAN (1959/SCI-FI CLASSIC IMAGE DVD/\$20)
HIDEOUS SUN DEMON (1958/IMAGE DVD/\$20)
IN SEARCH OF DRACULA (CHRIS LEE/82 minutes/\$20)
MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES (1957/CHANEY STORY/MCA \$20)
NIGHT TIDE (1963/DENNIS HOPPER/MILESTONE/\$20)
THE OLD DARK HOUSE (1932/KARLOFF/IMAGE-KINO/DVD/\$25)
PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES (HAMMER/ANCHOR/EXTRAS/\$25)
THE REPTILE (HAMMER/ANCHOR/EXTRAS/\$25)
THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD (1958/HARRYHAUSEN/EXTRAS/\$25)
STRANGLER OF THE SWAMP (1945/IMAGE/\$20)
THIS ISLAND EARTH - CLASSIC SCI-FI (1954/MCA/\$25)
WHITE ZOMBIE (1932/FILM+BELA INTERVIEWS!/TRAILER/ROAN/\$20)
THE WOLF MAN (1941/CHANEY/MCA-UNIVERSAL/\$25)



DRACULA

on DVD

by Ken Hanke



The great-granddaddy of the sound horror film has now been given the super-deluxe DVD treatment—all in one neat little package! The collector gets Tod Browning's classic 1931 version of *DRACULA* with Bela Lugosi, George Melford's Spanish version with Carlos Villarias, David J. Skal's documentary on both films, Skal's commentary track, assorted goodies (such as the reissue trailer, though why they didn't include the original trailer when there are clips from it in the documentary is a mystery), stills, production notes, and even the much-debated alternate track with Philip Glass' tacked on musical score. (Anyone making it through more than 10 minutes of this gets high praise for tenacity.) What immediately comes to mind is the question: is there really an audience eager to devour this package? *DRACULA* has become one of the most consistently downgraded of the original Universal horror shows, Browning's reputation has done little but slip over the years, and the Spanish version, while interesting and even instructive, is more a curio than a film likely to be endlessly viewed by horror enthusiasts.

The answer to that question is yes. The Universal horror fan who eschews this latest rendering of *DRACULA* is doing himself a great disservice. The chance for a fresh look at this much-maligned work is reason enough to give the release serious attention. Much revisionist thought has been expended in the last few years to prove the superiority of the Melford version and to demonstrate the overstated shortcomings of Browning's direction (and his career in general), but this new release may just illustrate that it's time to revise the revisions.

The singular thing about Browning's film is that it somehow transcended the normal rules of film to become a

great classic without ever having been an especially good film, though it—and its aims—have been so misunderstood and misrepresented over the years that it's actually a much better film than is now so often assumed. Without question, it is an archaic film and riddled with faults. It is neither the best work of its director or its star, and this is unfortunate. One would like *DRACULA*, the quintessential Lugosi role, to be the quintessential Lugosi film, just as one wishes that Browning's one Universal horror film would be his greatest achievement. But life is rarely so poetic and, instead of damning *DRACULA* for what it isn't (in tones that often sound more betrayed than critically reasoned), it's time to appreciate it for what it is—where it fits into the Browning mythos, the Lugosi legend, and the history of the horror film.

All films suffer to some degree on television (the only way most of us know *DRACULA*), and Browning's film is an even worse than usual victim of the medium. Much of Browning's approach to film is grounded on detail within the frame as opposed to isolating such detail via cutting. Frequently, the success (or failure) of the mood of a Browning film depends on unstressed details and touches in the background. (Consider the ghostly Borzoi that passes through the graveyard in 1935's *MARK OF THE VAMPIRE*.) On a large screen, this approach works on its own terms. Television with its vastly reduced and frequently degraded image undermines Browning's method to the point that it is often lost altogether. *DRACULA* is a film of suggestion and shading, not shock and surprise. It requires the best possible presentation to bring this out, which the DVD release comes closer to providing than anything short of seeing the film in a pristine 35mm print in a theater. It cannot restore

PAGE 31: The crazed Renfield (Dwight Frye) approaches an unconscious maid (Joan Standing) with—something or other—in mind. In the Tod Browning production of *DRACULA* (1931), the audience never found out. BELOW: Carlos Villarias played the bloodthirsty count in the Spanish version of *DRACULA*, filmed at night after Browning's company had gone home. RIGHT: The Vampire Brides (Dorothy Tree, Jeraldine Dvorak, and Cornelia Thaw) surround the fallen Renfield on this vintage lobby card. In the oval insert, Dracula (Bela Lugosi) menaces the mesmerized Mina Seward (Helen Chandler). PAGE 33 LEFT: It may arguably be scary, terrifying, and horrific, but was *DRACULA* ever really scary? Whoever wrote the ad copy for the studio seemed to think so, but the jury's still out on this much-debated Universal Horror. PAGE 33 RIGHT: Setting up a shot for the Spanish *DRACULA*, with Lupita Tovar as Eva (instead of Mina) and Barry Norton as Juan (not John) Harker.

the sheer size of the film—and size minimizes the often stagebound quality of the dialogue scenes—but it does bring out the creepiness of the detail better than any other home-video presentation, allowing the viewer to get something of the sense of Browning's style. Unfortunately, one of the principal psychological aspects of Browning's film—the sense of the architecture almost pressing down on the players, giving a sense of them being trapped in something that they are powerless to effect—requires the sheer size that can only be afforded by seeing the film on the big screen, but this is the only serious casualty of the presentation.

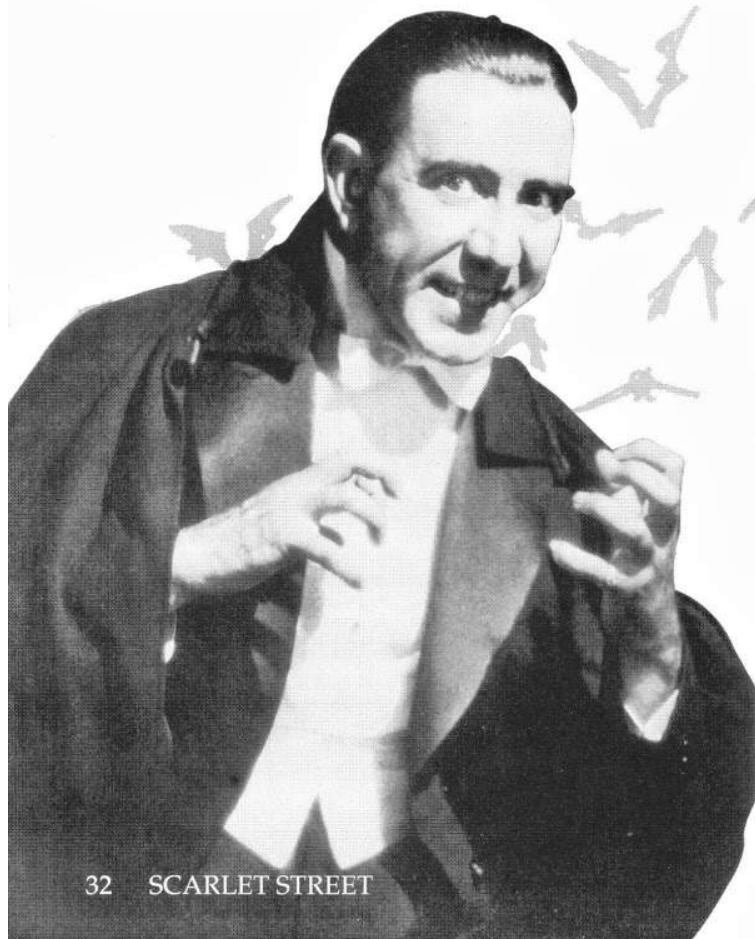
Browning's suggestive approach is particularly evident when comparing his version with the Melford film. Melford's *DRACULA* is often more fluid. It frequently makes better use of the two films' shared sets, so much so that the Universal brass must have been shocked to notice some settings in Melford's production that had been constructed for Browning's and never seen! But the Spanish *DRACULA* definitely goes for over-the-top shocks. The



style is very theatrical—strange precursors to the often quaint Mexican *Nostrodomus* films of 20 and more years later. It suggests stage magic more than the cinematic jolts James Whale pioneered in *FRANKENSTEIN* (1931), and display a literal-mindedness that is foreign to Browning. The difference is noticeable almost from the onset. Browning's *DRACULA* crypt has an unsettling atmosphere underscored by little pockets of mist escaping through the earth. Melford uses the same set, of course, but minus the fog effect. Instead, Melford has his vampire king emerge from a smoke-filled coffin—a stagey effect that wears out its novelty on repetition. Perhaps the most notable difference, however, is the scene in which Renfield (Dwight Frye in Browning, Pablo Alvarez Rubio in Melford) creeps across the floor toward the unconscious maid (Joan Standing, Amelia Senisterra in Melford). In Browning's version, the action cuts away before we see what happens—suggesting something unspeakable. With Melford, the same action is taken to its conclusion. The real object of Renfield's interest is shown not to be the maid, but a fly that eludes him at the last moment. In this manner, something disturbing is reduced to a gag.

Melford's production is indeed livelier, and yet it is actually a good 20 minutes longer, owing principally to scenes that Browning either shot or cut or never shot at all. This also makes the Melford film more coherent. It explains, for example, what those mountains are doing outside what appears to be a room in Seward's sanitarium in the first scene with Dr. Van Helsing (Edward Van Sloan in Browning, Eduardo Arozamena in Melford). It also provides a less abrupt climax. Browning's excision of the scene in which John/Juan Harker (David Manners, Barry Norton) and Van Helsing dispatch Lucy/Lucia (Frances Dade, Carmen Villarias) leaves the characters with no reason to be wandering around Carfax Abbey in time to spot Renfield and save Mina/Eva (Helen Chandler, Lupita Tovar). Nevertheless, Melford lacks the staying power of Browning. The fun evaporates once the lights come up, while something of Browning's inherent strangeness lingers in the corners of our minds.

One truly interesting and perhaps telling change that Melford makes concerns the vampirizing of Renfield in the film's opening scenes. In Browning's film, Dracula shoos his undead wives (Dorothy Tree, Jeraldine Dvorak, and Cornelia Thaw) away from the intended victim and, in what may well be the first homoerotic moment in a horror film, descends (one is almost tempted to say goes down!) on Renfield himself. (At this point, Browning, as usual, leaves the viewer to draw his own conclusions by suggestively ending the scene.) The action is true to the Bram Stoker novel with its much-debated line, "This man is mine." Strangely, Melford's *Dracula* actually summons the three



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Of course, the central strength of Browning's film is without question Bela Lugosi, the definitive Count Dracula. Lugosi is something that Melford simply didn't have, which may account for his tendency to otherwise live things up with his stage effects and more overt approach. Browning wisely left Lugosi to hold the viewers' interest, stressing his presence, his otherworldly look, the strange cadence of his speech. (Just why Browning never could get those pen-spotlights precisely on Lugosi's eyes is another matter.) Melford, alas, was saddled with Carlos Villarias, who seems all too often to be showing off his dental work—and the man seems to have more than the legal limit of teeth. That anyone can miss the fact that Villarias' Dracula is up to no good and clearly more than just an odd foreigner is a miracle of willful dim-wittedness on the part of the film's supporting characters!

The differences between the two films—each with its pluses and minuses, but for this reviewer with Browning's indelibly mythical quality winning hands-down—to one side, *DRACULA* is of such immense historic importance that quibbles about its actual value as a movie almost seem beside the point. In so many ways, it defines horror—all the trappings are in place in a manner that just hadn't come together before. For this alone, it is a film of riches beyond imagining and worthy of more respect than it is often given.

The bonuses on this DVD presentation are in keeping with those found on the earlier Universal Horrors series. Quite by accident, the totally inappropriate Philip Glass score demonstrates how masterfully Browning used silence—and perhaps why it took the sound film, with its ability to actually be silent, to really put horror on the map. (The oft-cited argument that *DRACULA* would benefit from a score is by no means laid to rest with this, since Glass, talented composer though he is, is simply unsuited to this task. *DRACULA* shows the benefit of silence to a great degree, and this was something a filmmaker could not control in the silent era. Just take a look at Lugosi's unearthly creeping across the bedroom and imagine how the same scene would play at the mercy of an overzealous cinema organist pumping away at a stock "misterioso" theme!) David Skal's commentary is one of the best yet and the documentary is, as usual, well made, even if one dearly wishes that the entire Edward Van Sloan curtain speech in whatever condition had been presented in its entirety and not excerpted with the otherwise delightful Carla Laemmle



talking over it. (Hands up, everyone who believes that she just happens to recall the curtain speech exactly!) Moreover, good as these documentaries are, there is beginning to be too much of a feeling of sameness about them, with the usual suspects trotted out to pontificate on the film. What they have to say is often interesting—though little is apt to startle an old hand at horrors Universal—but the core group, like the Count himself, could definitely stand some fresh blood. The Spanish version is preceded by an interview with that film's heroine, Lupita Tovar, whose introduction is basically the one that was used a few years back for the tape release of the Melford version. (Actually, her remarks about the making of the film—at least in one case—raise questions about the statement in the documentary that Melford and company would screen Browning's rushes and try to go him one better, since the Carfax Abbey sequence in Melford's film was apparently shot first.) It must also be noted that the transfer of the Melford film generally looks better than that of the Browning, though there's one section that is obviously taken from a print that was about to decompose entirely.

Still, there's no denying that this is quite the best *DRACULA* has ever looked and, comparatively speaking, it is stunning. It does, however, lack the revelatory quality that marked Universal's release of *FRANKENSTEIN*—although, to varying degrees, that may be said of all of the studio's subsequent DVD releases. (THE MUMMY was very nearly up to *FRANKENSTEIN* in quality—and its soundtrack was superb—but then THE MUMMY never looked too shabby to begin with, so the improvement was less pronounced.) Universal set the standard with the DVD of *FRANKENSTEIN*, but have never quite lived up to it, and they should perhaps worry a little more over the films themselves than all the neat extras, which, in the end, are the least important aspects of the presentation.

Even with these reservations, *DRACULA* is not to be overlooked. It may be the Universal Horror least wanted by collectors, but it is perhaps the one that was most needed.

Coming Soon: THE WOLF MAN!



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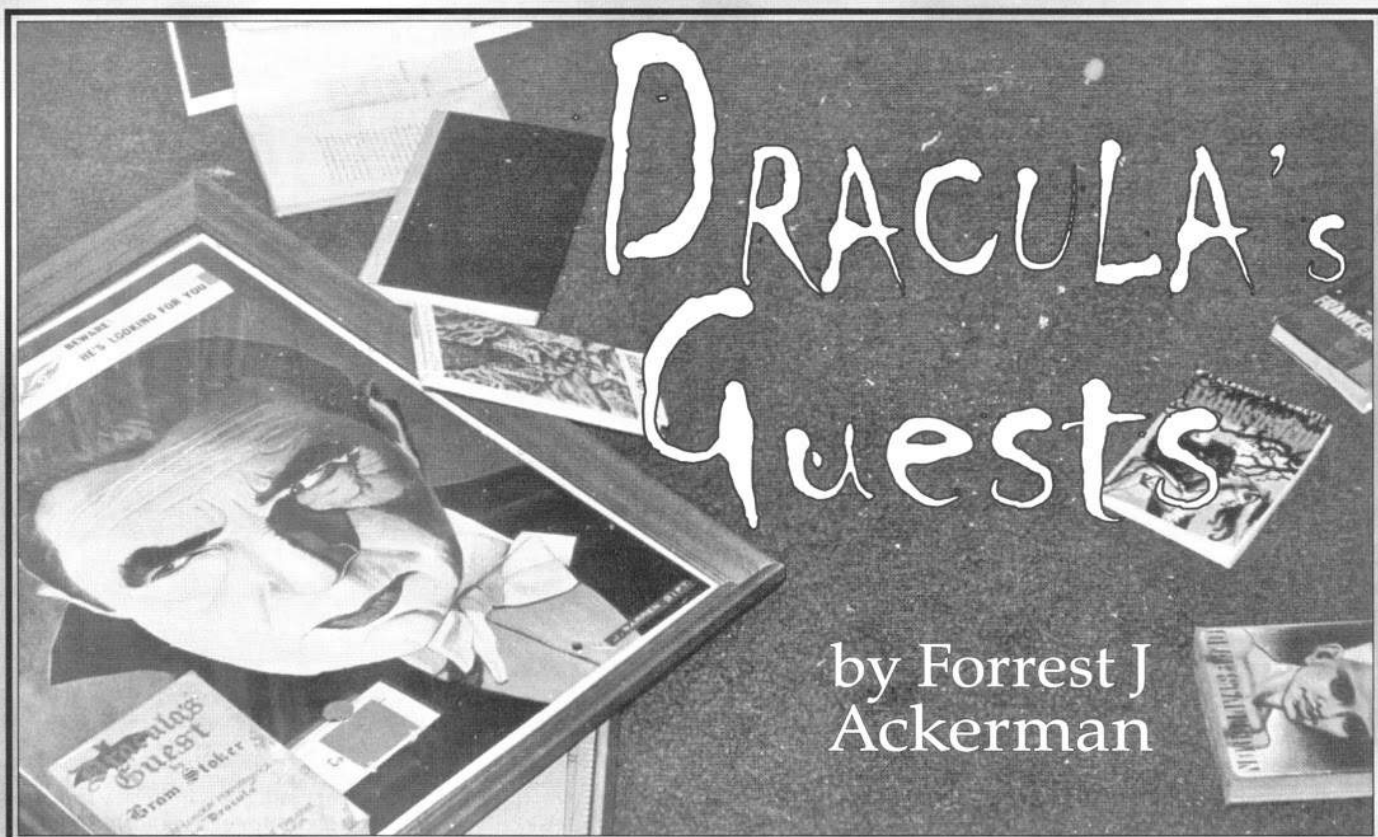


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A puff of smoke and Dracula disappeared from the stage of the Erlanger theater in San Francisco in 1932. But Bela Lugosi was indelible in the memory of 16-year-old Forry Ackerman, who saw him live on the stage that year, never dreaming that 21 years later he would write one word in my Guest Book—"Amazed"—and 22 or 23 years later I would own the very cape I saw him wearing in 1932 (and for the last time in PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE).

Richard Sheffield was a teenager who had never seen a Lugosi film. About 1953, he saw one and, like Ray Harryhausen seeing KING KONG, Ray Bradbury seeing THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, me seeing ONE GLORIOUS DAY, his life was forever changed. One glorious day he discovered that Bela Lugosi was living alone, by the world forgot, in a little apartment in his neighborhood. Well, the kid didn't have the nerve to go and ring Dracula's doorbell, so he got his aunt to phone and ask Bela if she could interview him. When he readily agreed, she asked if she could bring her nephew along. Again Bela was agreeable, and when young Sheffield met the old maestro he immediately realized that Bela could use all the help he could get and became kind of his personal Renfield, getting groceries for him from the store, having his shoes resoled, doing anything and everything he could to be helpful.

In the fullness of time, he phoned me and asked if I would be interested in meeting Lugosi. I said, "Lugosi who?" No, of course not; joke over; I was thrilled by the prospect. I had a young house guest from Japan at the time, Tetsu Yano, and he and my wife Wendayne accompanied me to the memorable meeting.

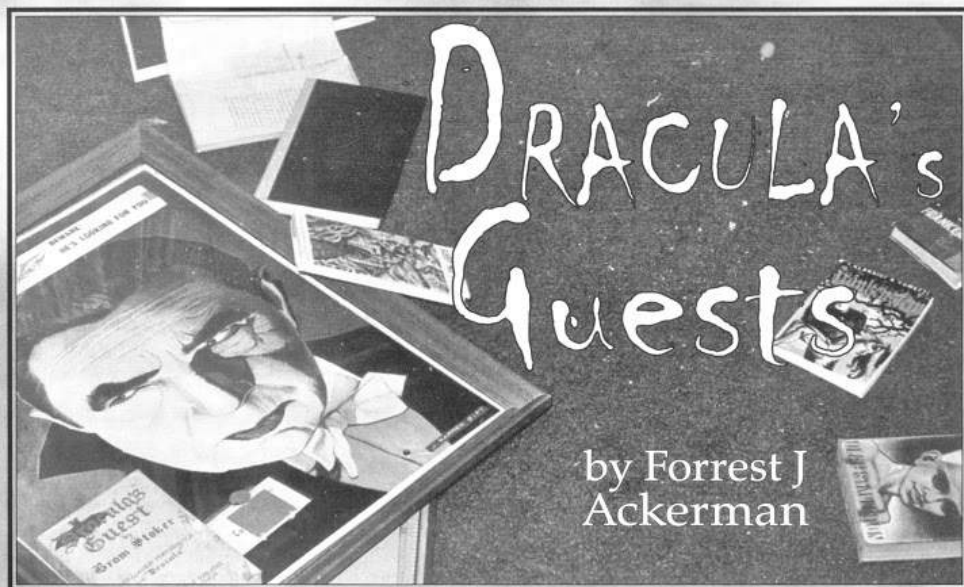
In 1932, Carl Laemmle, president of Universal Studios, had allowed me to obtain the discs (when sound was still on records and not on the film itself) from MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE, and I took one with me. I played it for Bela and, across a gulf of two decades, he heard his inimitable voice say, "My name is Dr. Mirakle and I am not a sideshow charlatan. So if you're looking for the usual hocus-pocus . . . just go to de box office and get your money back!" He laughed and absented himself from the room, and returned a few moments later in full Dracula regalia.

He put the whammy on Tetsu and I took a picture. He also whammied my wife. Like Dick Sheffield, we immediately realized Bela was lonely and so Wendayne and I incorporated him into our social circle and had him to parties in the original Ackermansion and took him with us to the home of Bebe (FORBIDDEN PLANET "tonalities") Barron.

During the three years before Bela's death, I met Ed Wood and became his literary agent. I recall one luncheon in Hollywood at a little eaterie that doesn't exist any more—I think it was called the Nickodell—and there Ed Wood and Criswell and Valda Hanson, perhaps Dolores Fuller and Conrad Brooks, and perhaps a couple other of Wood's coterie (except Bela) discussed various Wood projects, one of which was to be a vampire film—I believe, TOMB OF THE VAMPIRE. I suggested Bela would be welcome to use my pun-name, Dr. Acula. Ed thought the idea was great, and I have seen a shipboard interview with Bela in which he says he is going to make a picture in which he plays Dr. Acula.

On day in 1955, I drove him along Miracle Mile in Los Angeles to a shoe shop he preferred and, as he got out of the car to get his shoes from Hungary resoled for the nth time, he laid his hand on my shoulder, looked at me soulfully (no pun intended), and said, "I don't know why you young people are so good to me." "Well, Bela," I said, "you were good to us for years with all the movies you made." He shook his head in wonderment and headed for the store.

A woman named Hope Lenninger was such a fan of Bela's that, about 25 years before she met him, she started making a scrapbook and moving from New York closer and closer to him. She was working in Hollywood at the time he heroically turned himself in to be cured of his drug addiction. (I always hasten to explain he never got hooked for kicks, but had to take doctor-prescribed morphine to kill terrible sciatic pains.) On her stationery "A Message of Hope," she wrote him each day while he was in the hospital, eventually met him, and became his final wife. A tragedy: he was no longer the handsome, fascinating Continental gentleman, the movie star of her dreams, and she dominated and humiliated him. Once, in my dining room (with



A puff of smoke and Dracula disappeared from the stage of the Erlanger theater in San Francisco in 1932. But Bela Lugosi was indelible in the memory of 16-year-old Forry Ackerman, who saw him live on the stage that year, never dreaming that 21 years later he would write one word in my Guest Book—"Amazed"—and 22 or 23 years later I would own the very cape I saw him wearing in 1932 (and for the last time in PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE).

Richard Sheffield was a teenager who had never seen a Lugosi film. About 1953, he saw one and, like Ray Harryhausen seeing KING KONG, Ray Bradbury seeing THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, me seeing ONE GLORIOUS DAY, his life was forever changed. One glorious day he discovered that Bela Lugosi was living alone, by the world forgot, in a little apartment in his neighborhood. Well, the kid didn't have the nerve to go and ring Dracula's doorbell, so he got his aunt to phone and ask Bela if she could interview him. When he readily agreed, she asked if she could bring her nephew along. Again Bela was agreeable, and when young Sheffield met the old maestro he immediately realized that Bela could use all the help he could get and became kind of his personal Renfield, getting groceries for him from the store, having his shoes resoled, doing anything and everything he could be helpful.

In the fullness of time, he phoned me and asked if I would be interested in meeting Lugosi. I said, "Lugosi who?" No, of course not; joke over; I was thrilled by the prospect. I had a young house guest from Japan at the time, Tetsu Yano, and he and my wife Wendy accompanied me to the memorable meeting.

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Hope in the living room), he was singing the Hungarian blues to me of how cruel she was to him, and I trembled for him because I knew she could hear every word. (He was deaf and didn't realize how loud he was speaking.) After his death, I was in her apartment one day and with no shame she related how she married Dracula "and he was afraid of me!" He was very superstitious and believed one should sleep with a glass of water on one's nightstand. "And I controlled him!" Hope gloated. "I told him if he didn't behave I would remove the water!" She cared so little for her scrapbook of Bela that she casually offered it to me. A year later, it was stolen by a rascal now dead. Hope, also now dead, wound up in a leper colony in the Hawaiian Islands, to her credit caring for victims.

I was on the set of his last film, THE BLACK SLEEP, on one occasion when I wish I hadn't been. Lon Chaney Jr. was horsing around. At one point, he grabbed hold of poor Bela, who was not much more than a bag of bones, and flung him over his shoulder like a gunnysack! Bela didn't appreciate it; neither did I; but what can I do in this anecdote about Bela, it was a fact.

Together with his acolyte Dick Sheffield, I was with Bela at the premiere of THE BLACK SLEEP. We sat on the mezzanine and came down the stairs on either side of him. He was very vain and would not be seen in person wearing glasses, so he was blind as the proverbial bat and the foyer was just a big blur to him. "They want you in front of the TV cameras for an interview," we told him. "Boys," he said, "point me in the right direction." So we got him squared around and told him, "Now just take six steps forward and you'll be in the right position." I hope a kinescope of this exists, because it was a memorable moment. Here was this dear old icon, just two weeks away from his deathbed and looking tired and worn, but the world wanted him one more time. It seemed before our very eyes he straightened up, filled out, and strode forward as the tall, proud figure of . . . Count Dracula!

Before his funeral, I stood alone by his casket and silently observed him. "Bela," I said, "if you're here beside me in spirit form, I think you'll be very pleased with your final appearance." I am not aware if his son or Ed Wood

were present; I'm told Tor Johnson was bawling like a baby, but I do not remember it. It is disrespectfully untrue (neither of them were present) that Boris Karloff or Peter Lorre bent over his casket and said, "Come, now, Bela, stop fooling us. Get out of there!" I counted as people came down the aisle to pay their last respects and I was the next to last: number 101. Forty-four years later, he lives on in his Dracula ring which I wear, in the Karloff/Lugosi memorial room in my home, and in my heart.





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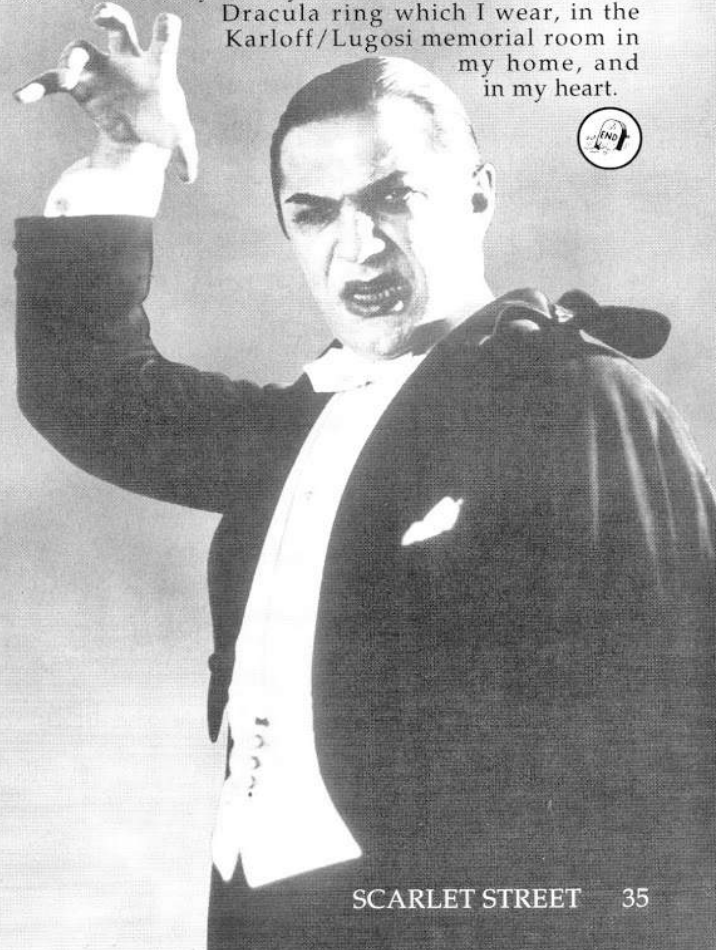
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LEFT: Miriam Haines (Kasey Rogers, acting under the name bestowed on her by Paramount Pictures: Laura Elliott) decides she doesn't want to divorce husband Guy (Farley Granger) after all when she sees what a bright future he has before him. Unfortunately for Miriam, Guy is one of two *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN* (1951)—and the other's a psychotic killer. RIGHT: Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker) follows Miriam to an amusement park, where he strangles her in exchange for Guy killing his father.

KR: I was so lucky; I didn't have the starving actress routine to go through. I had studied drama and music from the time I was a little kid, did the lead in the high-school plays—I was always involved and was seen by an agent and taken to Paramount. I did a screen test and they cast me in a lead in a movie the next week! (Laughs) Not a hard rise!

SS: *Scarlet Street*: Not much of a struggle! Was the screen test with any established star?

KR: With George Reeves, TV's Superman. I worked up a scene with George from *THE VOICE OF THE TURTLE*. It was the first time I was on a real sound stage, with a real crew and a real camera—the only uncomfortable thing about it came before we did our scene. They had me walk around the room touching things, and I thought it was silly. But George was a lovely man. He was under contract to Paramount at that time.

SS: Did you have much rehearsal time?

KR: We had plenty of time. We worked at it in the Fishbowl, just rehearsed it until we were happy and then we shot it. The Fishbowl was a large-sized room, perfectly furnished; it had a couch and chairs and a piano; a perfectly furnished room. The only thing is that one side of it was made of double glass. We couldn't see through it, but on the other side there were two rows of seats where the casting directors or heads of talent and your acting coach all sat watching you. That's why they called it the Fishbowl. My first picture was *SPECIAL AGENT*, opposite William Eythe, who no one remembers today—but he was a sizeable star at the time and, while we were working on *SPECIAL AGENT*, he was writing *LEND AN EAR*. That was the musical where Carol Channing was discovered. So he was very involved with the writing. He would shoot the film, but then he'd run to his dressing room and write and write. I hardly saw him except when he was doing a scene.

SS: Your second film *THE FILE ON THELMA JORDAN*.

KR: That was a Barbara Stanwyck picture. I had two or three scenes as a secretary or something; I really couldn't tell you much more about it than that. Robert Siodmak directed. He was European and rather austere. (Laughs)

SS: Did you take naturally to acting in front of the camera?

KR: Well, I was not a professional on the stage. I wasn't stagey, because when you're a kid and doing school plays and such, you don't get theatrical. It was just sort of doing what comes naturally. I did a lot of work in the Fishbowl with the drama coach and with the other students. Obviously, I had a lot to learn, and as I got on camera more and saw the outcome, I'd say "Oh, I didn't like that!" or "Oh, that kind of worked!"

SS: *The Fishbowl* sounds a lot like an interrogation room in a police station.

KR: More or less! (Laughs) And it was something, because you were in the room but you knew everybody could see you. You didn't know who was out there, you didn't know what they were saying, you couldn't hear them unless they put on the intercom thing—many's the time I did auditions in that room for a role or with the head of the talent department watching, and it could be a little intimidating. In fact, I visited Paramount a couple of years ago and went back to see if the room was still there. It was, but it's now an editing room. When I looked in the door, I saw all this editing equipment, and a couple of guys said, "We don't know what in the world this room was ever used for! Can you tell us?" and I explained all about the Fishbowl.

SS: They were wondering about the one-way glass. Why did Paramount change your name from Kasey Rogers to Laura Elliott and what were your feelings about that?

KR: Oh, I thought it was glamorous and beautiful! Kasey is a nickname and Rogers is my maiden name, but I guess that wasn't pretty enough. (Laughs) So I was Laura Elliott for five years and all the films I did were as Laura Elliott. Then

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SS: Well, they're two such different characters. Let's cover some of your early film appearances. You played a spectator in *SAMSON AND DELILAH*.

KR: Yes! I only had a couple of lines, but they were great, big closeups in the Colosseum scene. DeMille took half a day to shoot that! He was on this big boom thing, where the camera would go way up in the air and then come in close on you. It was—well, a spectacle is all I can say; it was incredible. Hedy Lamarr was one of the most beautiful women ever, on the screen. And DeMille was wonderful. Again, I was lucky to have worked with so many of the greats of that era.

SS: Did DeMille really use a megaphone when he directed?

KR: No, but he had on the boots and the riding crop and the jodhpurs; he wore that practically every day to the studio. He was very dramatic, himself. And I got to meet Adolph Zukor, who was one of the founders of Paramount and the entire motion picture industry. His son worked at Paramount as well. Zukor was a little man. I think I towered over him at five-feet-five! (Laughs)

SS: *SAMSON AND DELILAH* was a very big-budget film, but around the same time you appeared in a low-budget movie called *TWO LOST WORLDS*.

KR: And it became a cult film! That also starred James Arness; that was his first movie. He played the monster in *THE THING* and they say that's his first film, but when we were shooting I was under the impression that *TWO LOST WORLDS* was his first. He was the leading man, but it was my third film so I was the veteran. (Laughs)

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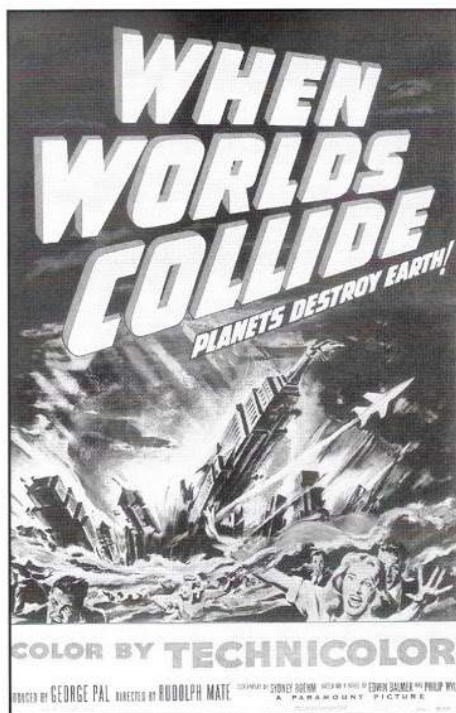
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KR: I was loaned out, yes. Most of my films were loan-outs. The first was SPECIAL AGENT, a Pine-Thomas B picture. GIRLS' SCHOOL was a loan-out to Columbia, and then TWO LOST WORLDS. I had forgotten about it, but in the past 10 years I found out it has quite a cult following. Have you ever watched it?

SS: About a week ago, in fact.

KR: Such a kick! We had everything from shipwrecks to volcanos to monsters!

SS: Everything! The volcano and dinosaurs are stock footage from ONE MILLION B.C.

KR: Yes, but we still had 'em. And the leading man's name changes in the middle of it. I call him Kirk something-or-other, then suddenly I start calling him something else! (Laughs). Of course, one of my most vivid memories of that film is running through Red Rock Canyon, which is just covered with tiny sharp rocks—running through it barefooted. Oh, that hurt! We tried taping our feet, but it showed. That was hard to do. Little rocks, you know? Sharp little devils, that's what we called them.

SS: TWO LOST WORLDS was produced by Boris Petroff.

KR: His daughter Gloria played my sister. When James Arness met Boris Petroff for the first time, his agent told him, "Sit down and don't stand up! No matter what you do, don't stand up!—because he was very tall and would have towered over Petroff! So he sat for the whole interview, and got the part! (Laughs) I had fun on that film—I used to climb the riggings of the ship. Oh, and this was funny—I had a scene leaning over the railing of the ship. Well, I had my costume on top and my shorts from the waist down, because it was so hot on the set!

SS: You actually had two leading men on TWO LOST WORLDS—James Arness and Bill Kennedy.

KR: Bill Kennedy kept trying to upstage me! One time he had his arm around me,

and he tried to bury my face in his shoulder so the camera would only be on him! He was always pulling tricks like that.

SS: You're also in a sci-fi film called WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE.

KR: Very briefly. That was the George Pal movie, right? Actually, I had been on location shooting SILVER CITY. I had the second lead in that; Yvonne DeCarlo was the good girl and I got to be the bad girl. We were gone for a month on location up at Sonora, California, and when I came back they were just wrapping up the George Pal picture, so I got to do a scene or two. Paramount had a thing called The Golden Circle at that time, where they had 12 young people under contract for a "stars of tomorrow" type thing, and we were all put in a scene in an airplane. It was kind of nothing, but I got a lovely gold charm, as did all the other kids for appearing in that movie.

SS: How were you cast in STRANGERS ON A TRAIN?

KR: Well, they had been looking for a number of months for someone to play Miriam. I was under contract at Paramount at the time. In fact, I had heard about the role and I thought, "Oh, that's not for me." However, my agent called one day and said, "Well, why don't you go on over and set up an appointment and read for Miriam?" So! Okay! I went over and read one of the scenes, and I thought, "Oh my God, this is wonderful!" (Laughs) So I read the scene; I took it home and worked on it. Then I read it for them, they liked it, and ultimately I got the part. Six women tested for the role on that one particular day, but I was cast!

SS: Did you meet Alfred Hitchcock before you were cast?

KR: No, not at all. No, I didn't meet him till after I was cast. He was a little awesome. I remember I wore a nice tweed suit and a little hat—we used to get all dressed up in those days—and he looked

at me and said, "You shouldn't look so severe." (Laughs) He was something else! Absolutely wonderful, though. Everyone has seen him on his television series. Well, that was Hitchcock; that was just the way he was! He played it to the hilt! I'm sure you heard the stories, how he always said shooting was the duller part of making a film because he'd already shot it in his head and with the storyboards. People ask, "How did he get such a performance from you?" I had to think about that, and I came to the conclusion that he'd seen the test, that's what he wanted, and so he already had the performance. He really didn't give me much direction, except where to go, where to stand, and things of that sort.

SS: The logistics, without telling you how to play the character.

KR: Yes, exactly!

SS: After Miriam is murdered, Bruno Anthony keeps remembering the murder whenever he sees the character played by Patricia Hitchcock. Was anything done beyond the glasses to forge that kind of link between the two characters?

KR: No, because I didn't even meet Pat. We didn't have any scenes together. I had met her socially at some point, but no, there was nothing. Hitchcock was very much "do your own thing" in a sense. Even with the glasses, he said, "Why don't you pick out some glasses?" I asked, "What kind of glasses?" He said, "Oh, just anything you think she would wear." So I went over to this little optical place and looked through the glasses. I found the pair I wear in the film; I thought, "Well, these look pretty, a little far out." They were a little far out for the time, but there's an interesting story about the glasses. They had six pairs of glasses made—two with clear glass, two with a mild prescription type thing, and two that were so thick that I couldn't see through them! I literally could not see my hand; it

was a blur in front of my face! And that's what he wanted me to wear, because it made my eyes look very small and mean! SS: So he had some input about the character after all!

KR: Yes! But I literally did the whole film not being able to see! In real life, Bob Walker wore thick glasses, but he didn't in the film—so we used to laugh and say that it was the blind leading the blind! (Laughs) But it was *very* difficult. In the record store, when I'd ring up a sale, I couldn't see the cash register. When I ran after Farley, yelling, "You can't toss me aside like that," I couldn't see him. Watch my hand running along the counter—that was so when it came to the end of the counter, I'd know I hit my mark. In the scenes with my two boyfriends, they always took my hand because I couldn't see where I was going. On and off the bus, on and off the carousel, into the boat—I couldn't see anything!

SS: Miriam doesn't have a single redeeming virtue, does she?

KR: No, she doesn't, does she? That's why she was so much fun to play. That's what drew me to the part—and the writing, of course, and the chance to work with Hitchcock. I just felt so lucky!

SS: Miriam's a married woman and she's pregnant with another man's child. That's pretty progressive for a movie of 1951.

KR: Oh, yes! In fact, when the movie came out—it was playing in all these theaters—I went on a sort of goodwill tour for the industry. There was a big bus full of movie stars, touring all around and making these stops. Well, my name then was Laura Elliott—that's the name Paramount gave me at the time. So they'd introduce me in front of these crowds as Laura Elliott and there'd be a little polite pitter-patter and claps. Backstage, I said, "You know, I *do* have a film out right now." The MC said, "Oh, what is it?" and I told him and he said, "Oh, my God!" And the next time he introduced me, he said, "And this is Miriam from STRANGERS ON A TRAIN!" And the crowd would stare and then they'd all start talking at once. (Laughs) It really made such an impact on them.

SS: Hitchcock filmed your murder memorably, reflected in your glasses that have fallen to the ground.

KR: Actually, that particular scene is studied at film schools, they tell me, to see how he did it. It's a mystery to me to this day, but I'll tell you the story. For the long shots, of course, we were out on location. We were in the park in the open night air, but when the glasses fell to the ground, we went onto the soundstage. When I say "we," I mean just Hitchcock, the crew, and me—nobody else was there. On the floor they had this large, concave, mirror type of thing. And the camera shot into that, which was the lens of the glasses. I stood with my back to it, a few feet away, so that my reflection would be in the mirror, and Hitchcock said, "Now Laura, float back; float to the ground." I said, "Yes, Mr. Hitchcock." So they said action and—well, you know how they do those limbo dances?—I started going backwards. Well, I'd get only so far back

and then all of the sudden I'd drop all the way to the floor! And he'd say, "Cut! Laura, *float* to the ground!" "Yes, Mr. Hitchcock." So I'd try again, and go back only so far and then clunk!—I'd hit that cement floor. (Laughs) Well, it got to the sixth take and I kept falling, and all he would say was, "Laura, float to the ground." And on the seventh take, I literally floated all the way to the ground. And he said, "Cut! Next shot!" And that was it.

SS: If you hadn't finally floated to the ground, your death scene might have really killed you!

KR: (Laughs) I at least would have had a concussion! Now, Robert Walker was not there, the trees were not there—it was just me and that big lens. So how he did a composite, how he put Bob's figure in there, and the trees and all that—well, I really don't know.

SS: It's an amazing shot! Where were the locations scenes for the amusement park shot?

KR: I think it was in Chatsworth. I'm not quite sure, but there was a lake and they brought in the carnival, the merry-go-round stuff. We shot at night, and it was freeeeezing cold! All the crew, of course, had on big parkas, but when we'd go into the scenes I had to take off my coat and be in this little silk summer dress.

SS: It looks nice and summery.

KR: Oh, yeah! (Laughs)

SS: You have one big scene each with your co-stars, Farley Granger and Robert Walker.

KR: Well, actually, I don't talk much with Robert Walker. There isn't much dialogue, just the interplay, the reactions—his following her around the carnival and catching her eye and the flirtation that's going on. It was all said without words. The only dialogue is at the end of the scene, when he stops her and says, "Is your name Miriam?" and she says, "Why, yes!" And then he kills her . . .

SS: Did you get on well with Robert Walker?

KR: Oh, I loved Robert Walker; he was wonderful! He was a wonderful actor and quiet and just adorable. Very talented and with a very deep side to him, so we got along wonderfully. Oh, yes, I liked him very much.

SS: STRANGERS ON A TRAIN was such a change of pace for him. He was always the boy next door, but here he's not only a psychopathic killer, he's gay.

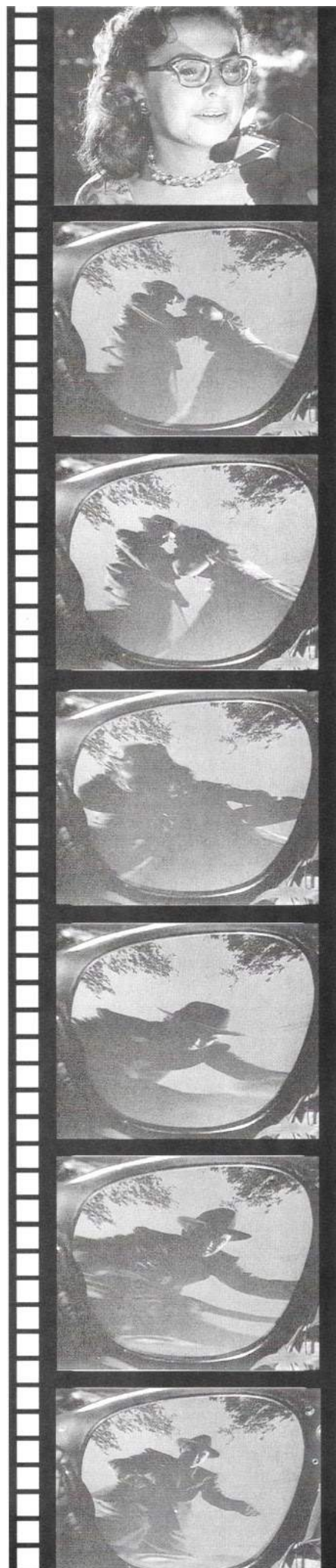
KR: They underplayed it, because that would have been way, way over the line in those days. I don't think the public would have been ready for that!

SS: Even with underplaying it, Bruno's homosexuality comes across very strongly.

KR: Well, that's Robert Walker. He was just brilliant. I don't think people really appreciated his talents. I mean, everybody liked him; he was a very popular star, but still, he was underappreciated, in a way.

SS: And what about playing opposite your "husband," Farley Granger?

KR: Farley was an eight by ten glossy! (Laughs) Now let your readers know I'm joking, because that sounds really nasty and catty. Farley was a *very* good-looking young leading man, and we worked together very well, but I didn't feel any great warmth with him as I felt with Rob-





ert Walker. Which is fine; it worked for the character.

SS: Yes, it did, as a matter of fact! So there you were in *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN*, some years before you played Louise Tate on *BEWITCHED*, and so was Marion Lorne.

KR: Yes! Aunt Clara! That was her first film over here. She was born in the United States, but she was working in England. Hitchcock knew her from England and brought her over here to play Bruno's mother. Again, we didn't have any scenes together. I really didn't meet her. But there we were, both of us in her first film over here and then in *BEWITCHED*, her last series. You talk about a brilliant comedienne—she was brilliant! Everyone thought that was just the way Marion Lorne was, dithery and forgetful and all that, but she knew what she was doing. She said something to the effect that you have to know the dialogue before you can screw it up. (Laughs) She knew exactly what she was doing. I taught acting for a number of years, and I used to tell my students, "Watch Marion Lorne—her timing, her takes, everything. Learn comedy from her." She was just brilliant and everyone's favorite in that series. I mean, everyone adored Elizabeth Montgomery, but any time you mention Marion Lorne's name it's "Oh, my God, Aunt Clara!"

SS: When scenes were shot more than once, did she play it the same way over and over or did she do variations?

KR: Well, it was basically the same, but there were always variations, especially when she was stuttering around and doing little takes. But whatever take they printed, it was wonderful.

SS: We've done quite a few interviews with the stars of *STRANGERS*: yourself, the late Ruth Roman, Farley Granger, Pat Hitchcock...

KR: I saw Pat this past year at a number of social things celebrating her father's 100th birthday. She and I both made appearances at cocktail parties and where they were showing the films and things like that. It was nice to see her; we met like we were old friends, although, as I said, we didn't have a scene together. But because of the close association of the two characters, I guess we just felt like we were old friends!

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SS: We want to cover some of your other early films—for instance, *A PLACE IN THE SUN*.

KR: They were using all the contract players as background people in the resort area, sitting around the lake. I was there for two or three days and worked with the other young people under contract to Paramount. I remember watching Elizabeth Taylor; she really was beautiful.

SS: What about *THE FRENCH LINE*?

KR: With Jane Russell! I had scenes in that one; I wore a beautiful dress and had a scene in a beautiful contemporary room, with a huge fireplace. I married a year or two after that, and my husband handled Jane's publicity. She and Connie Haines and I all became quite good friends and palled around socially.

SS: At Paramount, you went straight from appearing in the Bing Crosby movie *HERE COMES THE GROOM* to a movie with Bob Hope called *MY FAVORITE SPY*. What were your impressions of Hope and Crosby?

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SS: Ann Blyth?

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SS: Some people considered him cold.

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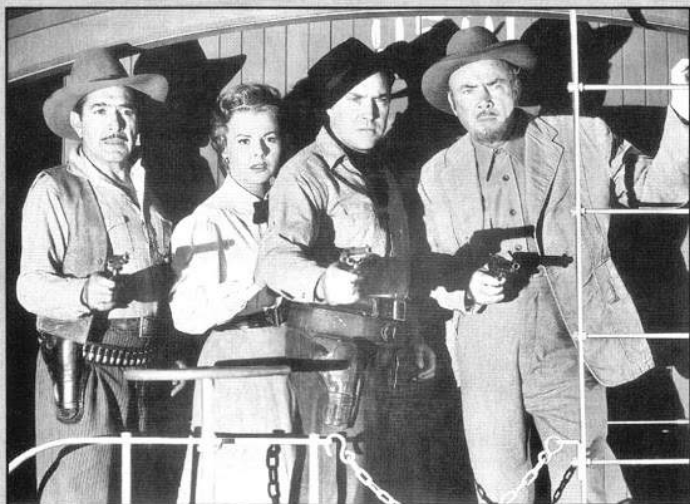
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Our Man on Baker Street

by David Stuart Davies

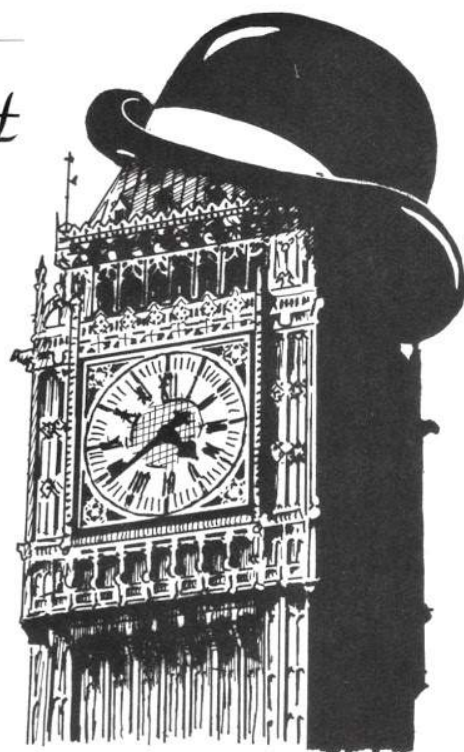
Murder Rooms

As a writer, Arthur Conan Doyle was a beachcomber on the beach of life (and, certainly, writers know that life is a beach). He would collect ideas, notions, impressions like driftwood from here, there, and everywhere, storing them up in his mind until his imagination called upon them to be used in a piece of fiction. Scholars are able to trace the influences Conan Doyle used in many of his novels and stories and yet perhaps the greatest mystery remains: from what well sprang Sherlock Holmes? Doyle was apparently open about the creation of his master detective: he said he was influenced by Poe's stories featuring the crime-solver Auguste Dupin, as well as having read the crime stories of Gaboriau. These certainly were literary influences, but there was also a living, breathing, charismatic influence. This came in the person of Dr. Joseph Bell of Edinburgh University, whom Doyle encountered when he was studying medicine. Towards the end of his life, Doyle explained the situation thus: "I was educated in a very severe and critical school of medical thought, especially coming under the influence of Doctor Bell of Edinburgh, who had the most remarkable powers of observation. He prided himself that when he looked at a patient he could tell not only their diseases, but very often

their occupation and place of residence." It does not take a genius to see the connection between this man of medicine and Doyle's fictional hero.

Bell came into Doyle's life not only at the age when young men are at their most impressionable, but also, in Doyle's case, when he felt emotionally adrift with nothing to cling to in the increasingly tempestuous sea of his personal life. His father was drifting into emotional madness and his mother, it would seem, had taken up with one of her lodgers. Young Doyle felt betrayed by his parents and was in desperate need of someone to look up to—a father figure, if you like. Then along came the magnetic Joseph Bell.

David Pirie, the writer who conceived and wrote the teleplay for *MURDER ROOMS: THE DARK ORIGINS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* for British television and *MYSTERY!* in the States, examined the details concerning Doyle's household in the 1870s. "Bryan Charles Waller, only a few years older than Arthur, moved into the house and was paying all the bills while his father seemed to be drinking himself to death. We'll never know exactly what the relationship between Mrs. Doyle and Waller was, but it is significant that in Doyle's autobiography he doesn't mention Waller at all directly, except to say something like 'my mother was forced to take in



lodgers, sometimes with disastrous results."

So Bell becomes mentor and surrogate father to young Doyle and introduces him into the world of crime detection. Well, at least that is the premise of David Pirie's television drama. In this fascinating "what if" reconstruction of history, Bell becomes the detective hero with the young Arthur as his Watson figure. Doyle recorded that "Bell was a very remarkable man in body and mind. He was thin. Wiry, dark with a high-nosed acute face, penetrating grey eyes, angular shoulders . . . his voice was high and discordant." This reads like advice notes to a casting director for a Sherlock Holmes movie, does it not? So Pirie's idea is not far from the mark—and makes for great entertainment.

In *MURDER ROOMS*, then, Bell, played with great bravura by Ian Richardson, emerges not so much as a Sherlock in embryo than as the fully formed character, with all the habits and nuances we associate with that fellow who resides at 221B Baker Street.

How far Bell was actually involved with the police, carrying out autopsies and advising them on medical matters is not really known, but it is an area ripe for supposition and Pirie takes advantage of it.

The early part of the first episode concerns with Doyle's introduction to the apparently eccentric and charismatic Dr. Bell. It is not without irony that Pirie places their first meeting, like that between Holmes and Watson, in a chemical laboratory. Bell's claims to deduce personal details about his patients do not impress the young student (played by Robin Laing): "They are conjuring tricks without practical

Robin Laing is young Arthur Conan Doyle and Ian Richardson, who once played Sherlock Holmes in *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* and *THE SIGN OF FOUR*, is Dr. Joseph Bell in David Pirie's *MURDER ROOMS: THE DARK ORIGINS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*.



application." Bell, considering that he has been accused of being a charlatan, responds with a splendid speech: "Here is a simple warning. From the astrologer came the astronomer; from the alchemist came the chemist; from the mesmerist came the mental specialist. The charlatan is the pioneer. The quack of yesterday is the professor of tomorrow."

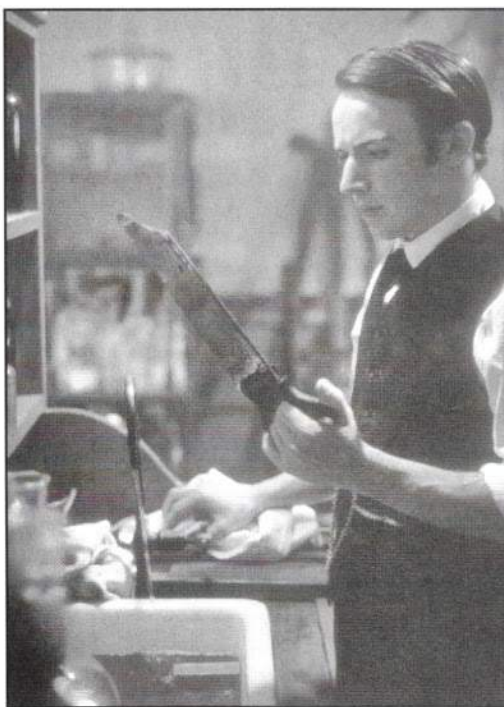
Despite his youthful cynicism, Bell admires Doyle's spirit and engages him as his clerk. Gradually, Doyle begins to suspect Bell harbours a secret life. One night he follows him to a morgue, where he discovers the doctor helping the police with their enquiries. (One is reminded of Ben Kingsley's Watson in the 1988 movie *WITHOUT A CLUE*, who desired to get rid of Holmes and become the Crime Doctor.)

Bell is aware that he has been followed by his apprentice and, as he coaxes Doyle from the shadows, advises him: "When you are following someone, keep away from lighted windows."

Now that Doyle has discovered his secret, Bell appoints him his assistant and so, in effect, they are both now in the detective business. Bell asserts, "I believe that crime can be diagnosed in the same fashion as disease if we use the same techniques." There is now a steady and fairly rapid transition into the Holmes and Watson partnership.

Bell becomes the Great Detective, muttering at one point that he has "long considered writing a monograph on criminal fathers;" and Doyle becomes the Watsonian sidekick—although he's a far more feisty and independently-minded one than the real Watson. (The real Watson? What am I saying?)

This swift transformation into their alter egos is easily explained. David Pirie's original desire was to bring Sherlock Holmes back to the BBC in a new set of adventures, but the powers that be were not interested. Their view was that Holmes has been done to death—and no doubt they were conscious of the long shadow of Jeremy Brett, which still dominates the viewers' consciousness. However, one sympathetic producer suggested that Pirie approach the subject from a fresh angle. "What about



In *MURDER ROOMS*, the man who would later create Sherlock Holmes becomes a detective himself.

Joseph Bell?" This simple question excited Pirie and set him on a quest to find out as much as possible about the man and his influences on Arthur Conan Doyle. *MURDER ROOMS* is the result.

The first investigation—a brief taster for the detective work to come—takes place in the middle-class home of grieving Mr. Canning (Ewan Stewart), whose wife has died under mysterious circumstances. Bell deduces that murder has been committed and by ingenious means: asphyxiation by gas administered through a concealed pipe. This is the first of the "murder rooms" of the title.

The second mystery in this drama is more convoluted, with a plot that does not quite hang together but is nevertheless engaging. The ingredients are suitably Gothic—a room full of blood, murdered prostitutes, and a cruel husband, Sir Henry Carlyle (played by the usually saintly Charles Dance). Pirie admitted that confusions are to be found in the second half of the programme because the script overran by 20 minutes and "certain cuts had to be made." (Faithful Scarlet

Streeters are advised to read no further if they don't want the solution to this second mystery revealed to them.)

One ingenious insertion into the plot is the character Neill Cream (Alec Newman), the notorious Pimlico Poisoner. Pirie discovered that in fact he was studying at Edinburgh University around the same time Arthur Conan Doyle was a student. "It was a coincidence I could not resist exploiting."

It is Cream, therefore, who is the second murderer. Through a series of unfortunate incidents, he escapes, but not before murdering Doyle's girlfriend, Elspeth (Dolly Bells). The barbarity of these apparently motiveless crimes crushes the young Doyle. Bell encourages him to "fight the future," to help seek out more effective methods for the detection of such crimes.

In a voiceover, Doyle states: "The feeling of loss was unbearable. Nothing will console me. Nothing. Certainly not words. But strangely in time words become my consolation. And out of pain came something else ... slowly. Elspeth had given the idea life and gradually it took shape. Someone who could have helped us surely as the doctor lost—the ultimate detective. But there was one final surprise that out of her death came someone the world believed in so much that he can never die."

In these final moments of *MURDER ROOMS*, there is a strong suggestion that Bell and Doyle will return to the screen as criminal avengers. And this turns out to be the case. The BBC was so pleased with the ratings and critical acclaim, that more programmes have been commissioned. There are to be four more episodes—filming begins this autumn. David Pirie will write the first and the fourth. The first one, *THE PATIENT'S EYES*, takes place about five years later in Southsea, where Bell joins young Doyle, who has set up in practice there, for a holiday. Someone in Southsea had better watch out! A murder will be done.

MURDER ROOMS is an imaginative, appealing, and entertaining idea. If we can't have the "real" Sherlock Holmes, then this, I reckon, is the next best thing.



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Ghosts With the Most! *Anne Jeffreys and* *Robert Sterling*

interviewed by Michael Mallory

Talking with the multit talented Anne Jeffreys about her career is complicated, because one first has to decide on which career to talk about. The Goldsboro, North Carolina, native (whose voice still betrays the gentle whisper of a Southern accent) has performed in everything from grand opera to soap opera, with stops everywhere from Kurt Weill to LOVE, AMERICAN STYLE in between.

As a contract player first at Republic, then at RKO, Anne racked up nearly 50 film credits in only seven years! Since the late forties, her feature film appearances have been far more infrequent (her most recent film was 1994's CLIFFORD, with Martin Short), allowing her to devote more time to the stage. She has played leading roles in such musicals as STREET SCENE (the original Broadway production), KISS ME KATE, THE KING AND I, CAMELOT, and KISMET, and has racked up dozens



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of TV appearances, including a regular part in the 1972 series THE DELPHI BLUE, for which she received a Golden Globe nomination. She had a recurring role in TV's popular BAYWATCH as star David Hasselhoff's mother, and she continues to be recognized everywhere in the world by fans of GENERAL HOSPITAL as socialite Amanda Barrington. She is equally fondly remembered, though, as Marion Kerby, the "ghostess with the mostest" from TV's TOPPER series, which originally aired on CBS from 1953 to 1955, in which she costarred with her real-life husband, Robert Sterling, whom she met in New York, while the two were playing in different theaters at opposite ends of Broadway's Shubert Alley.

Even though it's been more than 25 years since he stepped before a motion-picture camera, Robert Sterling is fondly remembered by a generation of baby boomers as the debonair ghost George Kerby in the television version of Thorne Smith's TOPPER.

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Scarlet Street: Anne and Robert, we want to thank you for taking the time to talk to *Scarlet Street*.

Robert Sterling: Happy to do it.

SS: Let's start at the beginning, shall we? Anne, we were surprised to learn that you were an opera singer.

Anne Jeffreys: I started out that way, but I didn't particularly like doing opera. It was too stiff and too confining.

SS: How did you make the transition into films?

AJ: When I first came out from New York—I had lied a year about my age so I could work—I got a film at MGM called I MARRIED AN ANGEL with Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy, and I was so thrilled because Nelson Eddy had been my hero for years. Whenever he came around on the set, I couldn't talk—I'd just stand there with my mouth open. When I finally got so I could talk to him, he said he was working on TOSCA. He asked if I would be willing to come and work on it with him, and, of course, I said, "Duuuhh...!" (Laughs). By the end of the picture, he was so sweet and so nice and so warm and friendly with everybody, and after the film was over he gave me a photograph of the two of us taken together. On the bottom it says, "To Anne Jeffreys from her adoring slave, Nelson Eddy." That's still on my piano, after all these years!

SS: How did you get from doing TOSCA with Nelson Eddy to riding the range with Wild Bill Elliott?

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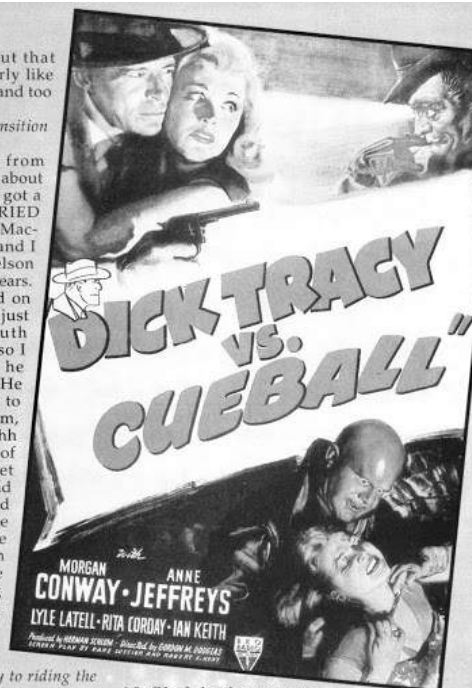
SS: Other performers, including Roy Rogers, have mentioned how Gabby Hayes would coach young players in acting for the camera. Did he do that with you?

AJ: I never heard him do that, and I did 10 pictures with him! (Laughs) He was just a close friend. I adored Gabby. You know, Gabby Hayes would come to New York and go to a place that we all frequented called Danny's Hideaway. He'd come in all slickered up with his hair all combed back and a good-looking black suit, and he looked like a million dollars!

SS: Robert, what memories do you have of starting out as an actor?

RS: I remember I didn't get the role that I wanted. I was offered the lead role in GOLDEN BOY in 1939. But the director, Rouben Mamoulian, came to town and he wanted Bill Holden. Hell, we looked like brothers, then! (Laughs). Anyway, I didn't get it and was very disappointed.

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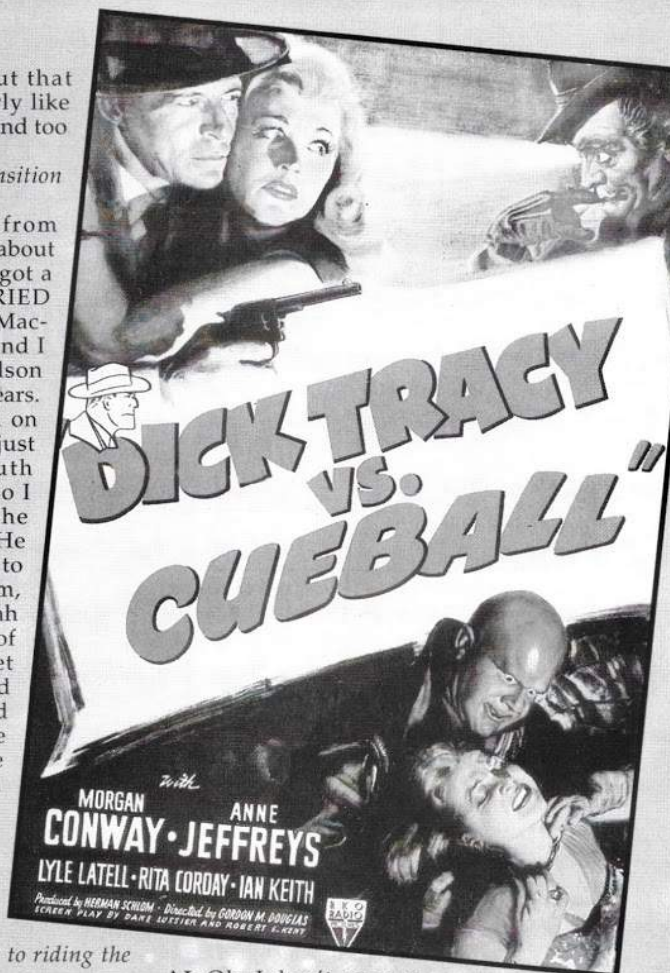
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SS: But you did get to work with Garbo in her last film, *TWO-FACED WOMAN*.



LEFT: Garbo laughed in *NINOTCHKA* (1939), but there was nary a chortle when the followup, *TWO-FACED WOMAN* (1941), flopped at the box office. It was Greta Garbo's last movie, and Robert Sterling (television's George Kerby) was there to witness it with Constance Bennett and Roland Young (the movies' Marion Kerby and Cosmo Topper). RIGHT: Anne Jeffreys found herself at the mercy of Bela Lugosi in *ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY* (1945), a comic pseudo-sequel to *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* (1943).

RS: Oh, she was a delightful person.

SS: Too bad she retired so soon. *TWO-FACED WOMAN* was directed by George Cukor.

RS: He was an easy director for me to work with, because I'd known George for a long time. He was a perfectionist. All good directors are perfectionists, really.

SS: Anne, how did you make the move from Republic to RKO?

AJ: I got an offer to go to RKO and do a thing called *STEP LIVELY* with Frank Sinatra. Of course, we jumped at that, so we bought my contract out of Republic and went over to RKO, and I did picture after picture after picture. I probably worked more than any of the other contract people. I used to say my name was "Get Annie," because any time Joan Fontaine didn't want to do a picture, or somebody else didn't want to do it, they'd say, "Get Annie!" (Laughs) I always said yes and I would do anything. It was great training, I liked to work, and they paid every week whether I worked or not. I got my first billing above the title with

Pat O'Brien in 1947, in a picture called *RIFFRAFF*.

SS: You made a string of films at this time with Lawrence Tierney: *DILLINGER* and *THOSE ENDEARING YOUNG CHARMS* in 1945, and then *STEP BY STEP* in 1946. Was that simply because you were contractees or was RKO trying to establish the two of you as a team?

AJ: No, I don't think they were trying to make a team of us, I think it just happened so. *DILLINGER* was a loan-out; they lent me to the King Brothers. [Note: In the forties, Frank, Maurice, and Herman King were the Warner Bros. of Poverty Row.] *STEP BY STEP*, I don't even remember the story; I just remember sitting on the beach in a bathing suit.

SS: We've heard a lot of stories about Tierney's bad behavior on the set. Did you work well with him?

AJ: No! (Laughs) The stories are probably all true. He was a very difficult man. He was very bright, bright as could be, but a typical Irishman, couldn't take a drink.

He'd take one drink and he was an awful wild man.

SS: What memories do you have of working with Wally Brown and Alan Carney, RKO's answer to Abbott and Costello?

AJ: RKO made a team out of them. I don't think they had worked together or even knew each other before the studio made a team out of them. They were funny and wild, too, always joking and always carrying on. I liked them very much. I did one with them and Bela Lugosi, which has now become a cult film: *ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY*.

SS: You appeared with Brown, Carney, and Lugosi in *ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY* in 1945, and then again in *GENIUS AT WORK* in 1946. What was Lugosi like?

AJ: Very nice, very nice. Very quiet, very reserved, kept to himself. We had one scene where he was lying in a coffin in a darkened room, and I walked into the room. He rose up from the coffin, and for some reason I had a monkey wrench in my hand and I whacked him over the

LEFT: In the forties, Anne Jeffreys found herself in a string of Westerns for RKO and Republic Pictures, including *BORDERTOWN GUNFIGHTERS* (1943) with Wild Bill Elliott and George "Gabby" Hayes. RIGHT: Robert Sterling played a young fighter opposite Ann Sothorn (his first wife) and Rags Ragland, one of a series of "Maisie" films.



head and he went back down in the coffin. Well, even though it was a rubber monkey wrench, it had a wire in the center of it to give it strength. When we did the scene, he scared me so much that I really whacked him! He said, "You don't really haff to kill me, you know!" (Laughs) Oh, dear, did I get teased about that!

SS: During these same years you made some Dick Tracy mysteries, playing his girlfriend, Tess Trueheart.

AJ: I made two with Morgan Conway, DICK TRACY VS. CUEBALL and another one just called DICK TRACY. And of course, I did two big Westerns in 1947: TRAIL STREET and RETURN OF THE BAD MEN. We did the two of those almost back-to-back.

SS: After escaping cowgirl duty at Republic, did it seem as though you were taking a step back by doing Westerns again?

AJ: When they came to me at RKO to do a Western, I said, "Gosh, I really don't want to do a Western." But they had Randolph Scott, a fellow I adored and a fellow North Carolinian, and they had Robert Ryan, a top-rate actor, and of course they had Gabby Hayes, who I knew as a friend. The part was good, so I agreed to do it.

SS: Did you enjoy doing Westerns?

AJ: I did. I even enjoyed the ones we did at Republic; I just didn't want to be typed as a cowgirl.

SS: So you went back to Broadway?

AJ: I went back to Broadway and did STREET SCENE, and it got absolutely brilliant reviews. But it's a very depressing story set in the slums of New York, about a family and their tragedy. It wasn't really the kind of show a tired businessman goes to see and has a great yippee-ya-ha time. It had a good run for six months, but I had to leave because Peter N. Rathvon, the head of RKO at the time, had only given me six months' leave to do the musical. So I came back and they offered me this psychological Western with five ladies and a leading man. Mr. Rathvon said, "You can have your choice of five leading roles." And I said, "Well, who's the leading man?" I thought he was going to say Gary Cooper or Clark Gable, but he said, "Robert Sterling." And I said, "Robert Sterling? I'm going to play one of five hookers for Robert Sterling?" (Laughs) Mr. Rathvon said, "Yes, we brought him from Metro for this picture, ROUGH-SHOD." And I said, "No, I don't want to do it. I've got an offer from Broadway; I want to go back to New York." So I wound up buying my contract out. Howard Hughes was just coming in to take over the studio, and I had been chased by Howard for years, and managed to keep one step ahead of him. I thought, "Now he's going to buy the studio and I'm going to be trapped!" So I bought my contract out and went back to Broadway.

SS: But obviously, that wasn't the last you heard of Robert Sterling.

AJ: Later on, we met in New York, and six months later we were married. That was in 1951.

SS: Wasn't it odd to be doing Broadway in those days while you were still under contract to make Westerns at Republic? How did it come about?

AJ: I was at my singing teacher's studio one day, working on TOSCA, and this man comes flying through the door in a white suit, black hair that came down to his shoulder, a white fedora, and a black cane. And he said, "You musta singa for me inna Brrrrooklyn!" So we went back to New York. I did TOSCA and it was a critical acclaim, and at the matinee, Kurt Weill and Maurice Ravenel—a famous conductor, he conducted the Salt Lake City Symphony up until his death rather



Darby Jones repeated his I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE role in ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY (though the character was named Kolaga instead of Carrefour), and walked away with Anne Jeffreys if not the entire picture.

recently—they said, "We've come to see the show because we want to offer you a musical." I said, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no, I've got to go back to Hollywood; I've got a contract." They said, "Why don't you hear the music?" So out of deference to Kurt Weill, I went up to the Adelphi Theatre, and he sat down at this little rickety piano in a bare, wooden office, with the windows open onto 52nd Street, and he started playing this music and singing in his broken-down voice, and I'd never heard such beautiful music in my life. I said, "I've got to do it!"

SS: And that was STREET SCENE.

AJ: Then after leaving RKO, I did a stage musical that was really tailored for me. It was called MY ROMANCE. J. J. Shubert wanted me to do it so badly—he was very sweet to me. I've heard a lot of nasty

things about the Shuberts, but I never had any problems with J. J.; he was a thorough gentleman and he gave me anything I wanted. I was his "prima donna," and I played an opera singer who falls in love with an Episcopal minister. We played the Shubert Theatre in New York, and we didn't last too long. Our reviews were good, but they said we were more or less an old-fashioned operetta, and that won't draw tired businessmen, either. So I was offered KISS ME KATE, and I didn't want to do it, because I had a commitment to do THE MERRY WIDOW at the Greek Theatre. I had already contracted to do it, so I said, "No, I can't do it." Pat Morison took the role and the rest is history.

SS: She was another B-movie veteran, having recently made DRESSED TO KILL with Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes.

AJ: But about six months later, they came to me and asked me if I would do KISS ME KATE in the national company, playing Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago. I finally agreed, and of course it was one of the best things that ever happened to me. We had a very successful run here and in San Francisco, and in Chicago for 11 months—we played seven days a week, so I didn't have a day off for 11 months! Then they said, "We have an offer: You can either go to London with the show or you can take over the New York show for Pat." I said, "London!" But I had a boyfriend in California who was flying every weekend to Chicago, and he couldn't fly to London every weekend." So I said, "I'd rather take over New York if Pat wants to go to London." So that was another year. I spent two years doing KISS ME KATE!

SS: So you starred on Broadway in KISS ME KATE because of a boyfriend in California. When did Robert Sterling reenter the picture?

AJ: I was singing at the Capitol Theatre, the shows between movies. My publicity man, who I inherited from RKO, was John Springer. John came backstage one night and he had Robert Sterling with him. So we had something to eat after the show, and I didn't think anything more about it.

He was recently divorced and he was so glad to be free from his ex-wife. He said he wanted to do a Broadway play. He was very nice and that was it. A year or two later, I'm in KISS ME KATE at the Shubert and I looked down Shubert Alley and the Morosco marquee said "Coming: Robert Sterling and Sarah Churchill in GRAMERCY GHOST." Sometime later, I was sitting in Sardi's having dinner with my aunt and uncle, and my uncle said, "Anne, I thought there were a lot of stars in here, but I don't see any." I said, "Well, there usually are," and I looked around and there's Robert Sterling, just getting up from the bar. As he passed by, he stopped and I said, "Oh, Robert, I want you to meet my aunt and uncle from North Carolina. This is Robert Sterling." And they were ga-ga! (Laughs) He said,



"I'll give you a call," and I said, "Oh, yeah, sure." I didn't want to go out with him—I had this fellow back in California. He said, "Well, give me your phone number." I was a little embarrassed, but I gave it to him, because I didn't want to embarrass my aunt and uncle. So he called the next day, and he said, "How about going out?" I said, "I can't." But his show got out about 20 minutes before mine, and he kept coming by my stage door. He'd say, "Let's go out" and I'd say, "No, I have to go home." One night he said the same thing, and I said, "I can't," and he said, "Well, I've finally learned to take rejection." He was so hurt. I felt terrible. So I called him back and said, "I have two tickets for the Actors Equity performance of *THE KING AND I*. Would you like to go?" And so I finally

we got together, and he had a limo and I was dressed in white satin with a white fox and pearls, and we went to see *THE KING AND I*. Everybody was screaming and applauding and we just loved every minute of it. Afterwards we went to the Stork Club and had something to drink, and then he took me home. When we got to the door, he gave me a big kiss right on the mouth, and he said, "You got any plans?" I said, "Well..." and he said, "Don't make any, because I'm taking over." And he turned around and walked away, and I stood there stunned. And I must say, it was a lovely kiss. It took about two weeks, seeing each other, his coming by the theater and going out together, but I finally told my other beaux that I had fallen in love with somebody else. Six months later, we were married. That was in 1951.

SS: *How did you both get cast in TOPPER?*

AJ: I had gotten an offer from Las Vegas to do a nightclub act, and I thought, "I don't want to do a nightclub act; I don't like performing in nightclubs. I like being on the stage, being someone other than me." But my mother said, "It's good money and a good opportunity for you. Why don't you and Robert do an act together?" I said, "You're kidding?" But Robert said, "Yeah, I would like to do that." So we got Bob Wright and George Forrest, who wrote *KISMET* and *SONG OF NORWAY*, and they came and practically camped in our house for I don't know how long! They took things we said to each other and the way we acted with each other and they wrote numbers and songs for us, and when they fit it all together it was like a

small musical. So we went to Vegas. Well, while we were playing in Vegas, my agent called us about doing *TOPPER*. They knew we were working as a team doing the nightclub act, so that's where they got the idea. And I had loved the *Topper* movies as a child. I said, "Robert, you want to do *TOPPER*?" And he said, "Sure!" So we came back and played the Coconut Grove at night and shot the pilot during the day. Then we went up to the Fairmont in San Francisco. They called and said it was the quickest selling pilot of that time—only two weeks after they got it all together, it sold! So we canceled the rest of our club acts to come back and do *TOPPER*.

SS: *Did you enjoy starring in TOPPER?*

AJ: It was great fun, but it was awfully hard work. We shot six days a week, we shot on Saturday, and we had three days scheduled for each half-hour film. And of course with all the tricks, the wires, and the dog, it was very complicated. We very rarely finished on Wednesday night on time, so we worked until midnight on Wednesday. On Thursday morning, if we had finished Wednesday night, we'd start on the next episode! I forget how long we worked on it that way. And then we would crash on Sundays—Robert'd go play golf and I'd crash. Monday morning we were up at 4:30 and back at the studio. It was a very successful series.

SS: *What are your memories of Leo G. Carroll, who played Cosmo Topper?*

AJ: We became so close—but not at first, because he was very British and standoffish. Between scenes, he'd go sit in the cor-

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And Leo G. Carroll as Topper

by Bruce Dettman

Despite the popular and critical success of writer/satirist Thorne Smith's most famous work *Topper* (with some 2,000,000 copies sold between its publication date in 1926 and 1932), it took Hollywood 11 years to bring the property to the big screen. The film version of the novel, severely stripped of its blatant sexual content, was produced by the Hal Roach Studios and starred Cary Grant and Constance Bennett as the rowdy, free-spirited, and liberally imbibing ghosts George and Marion Kerby and character actor Roland Young (in his younger days Watson to John Barrymore's Sherlock Holmes) as Cosmo Topper, the much put-upon staid banker and unwitting friend of the pair of carousing specters.

TOPPER, charming and madcap in the celebrated tradition of screwball comedies of the period, was so successful that a followup film, based on Smith's only other *Topper* novel, *Topper Takes A Trip* (1927), was released, sans Cary Grant, in 1939. A third and final entry TOPPER RETURNS, not based on a literary source and minus the services of both Grant and Bennett, but featuring the always delightful Joan Blondell as Topper's latest ectoplasmic companion, went before the cameras in 1942. In addition, Young's association with the character extended to the airwaves in a short-lived and largely forgettable 1945 radio series, THE ADVENTURES OF TOPPER, which costarred Paul Mann and Frances Chaney as the devil-may-care Kerbys.

In 1953, producers John W. Loveton and Bernard L. Schubert opted to bring the concept to the new medium

of television as a weekly series. Original runs of the program, broadcast on CBS, only lasted two years, but its popularity was such that it enjoyed a long life in reruns, first on NBC and later ABC. Decades of airings on syndication around the world further cemented its reputation.

Much of the show's success and the deep affection it garnished among a legion of loyal fans had to do with the excellent and engaging cast assembled by Schubert and Loveton. Real life husband and wife team Robert Sterling and Anne Jeffreys were recruited for the roles of George ("that most sportive spirit") and Marion ("the ghostess with the mostest") Kerby. Delivering terrific chemistry, boundless energy, and sophisticated charm, the handsome, martini-guzzling couple were joined by the brilliant Leo G. Carroll (whose other roles ran the gamut from 1945's THE HOUSE ON 92ND STREET and Alfred Hitchcock's 1951 classic STRANGERS ON A TRAIN to 1955's TARANTULA and later the TV series THE MAN FROM UNCLE) as Topper. The supporting cast was equally likeable, led by Lee Patrick (Sam Spade's secretary in 1941's THE MALTESE FALCON) as Topper's constantly agitated, dithery, and suspicious wife, Henrietta; movie veteran Thurston Hall, loud and blustery as Topper's threatening boss Mr. Schuyler; Kathleen Freeman as the Topper's maid Katy in the first season; Edna Skinner taking over domestic services as Maggie the cook in the second; and Buck as Neil, the Kerby's perennially hung-over St. Bernard.

Each week the viewing public was invited into the Topper household to watch as the unflappable banker at

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ABOVE: Robert Sterling, Anne Jeffreys, Leo G. Carroll, Lee Patrick, and Neil in TOPPER. RIGHT: Carroll in Universal's TARANTULA (1955).

LEO G. CARROLL

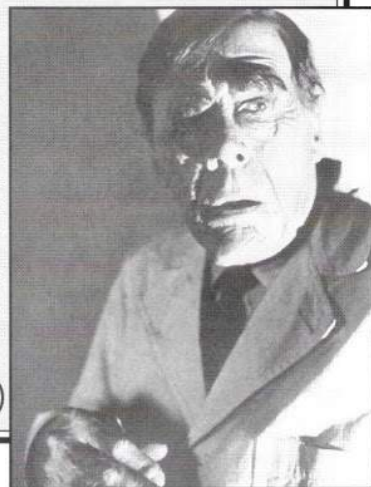
Continued from page 49

tempted to get on with his comfortably predictable middle-class life while at the same time dealing with the house's former owners, the irresponsible and often hair-brained Kerbys, who only he can see and hear. Episodes found the dignified Topper the victim of a physical culturist (played by future Hercules Steve Reeves), up against international thieves, or even grappling with a pro wrestler, somehow always managing with—and often in spite of—the Kerbys well intentioned but not always capable assistance, to get out of trouble. The show was marked by crude special effects as all manner of items floated, often none too smoothly, across the Topper living room, an overly raucous laugh track, silly scripts (some penned by Stephen Sondheim), and a near nonexistent budget. Yet somehow the well intentioned, unassuming blend, often directed by seasoned Hollywood helmsman Lew Landers (1935's THE RAVEN and 1944's THE RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE), struck a most congenial chord with the public, even if some of the show's critics initially lambasted Carroll for what they viewed as a tasteless impression of Young, while various conservative groups complained about the

excessive booze consumption. (It was toned down in the second season.)

Half the fun was watching to see how Topper would talk his way out of all manner of impossible situations, particularly as regards the aforementioned gravity-defying array of miscellaneous items, which were often drinks ("Of course it's floating. It's very light on vermouth"), newspapers ("Must be fly paper"), or letters ("Air mail, my dear"). The other half was watching the coy, frisky, and radiant Marion drive Topper nearly mad with her sexual titillation and unbridled flirtation. ("Oh Toppie. Come on, let's have some fun!")

TOPPER, although never a major success with the public or critics, left an indelible impression on many who grew up with it, a warm and affectionate impression that was not extended towards two disastrous attempts to bring the character back to the small screen, once with Stephanie Powers and John McMartin as the ghostly couple and Roddy McDowell as Topper's nephew (an entirely new creation), and again in a later flop with Kate Jackson and Andrew Stephens as the Kerbys and a woefully miscast Jack Warden as Topper. Both attempts missed the point (and popularity) of the original series: its warmth and wonderful comradery of stylish characters and overall spirit(s) of fun and grace and simple good humor.



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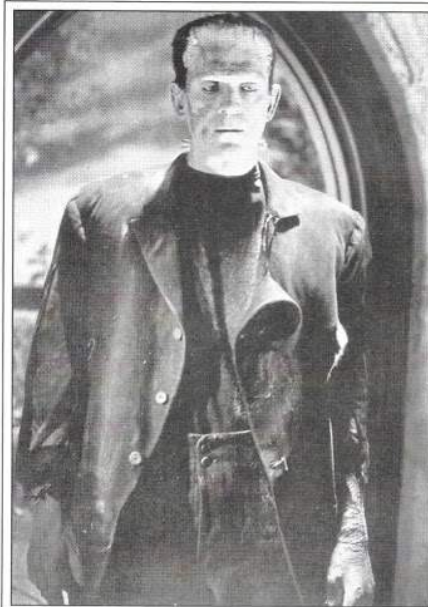
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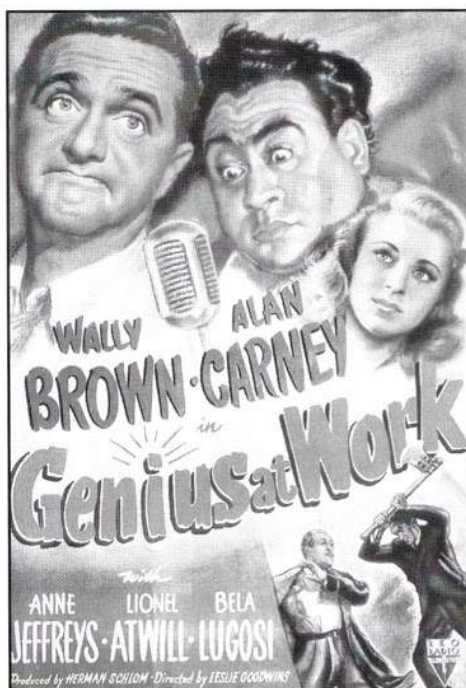
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PAGE 46 TOP: Anne Jeffreys starred as Lalume in the 1965 revival of the musical *KISMET*. **PAGE 46 BOTTOM:** The cast of the 1951 film version of *SHOW BOAT* included Kathryn Grayson, Howard Keel, Ava Gardner, Joe E. Brown, Agnes Moorehead, and Robert Sterling. **LEFT:** Anne made the second of two appearances with Wally Brown, Alan Carney, and Bela Lugosi in *GENIUS AT WORK* (1946), which added Lionel Atwill to the mix. **RIGHT:** Robert enjoyed working with Peter Lorre, Barbara Eden, and Walter Pidgeon in *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA* (1961), but not Joan Fontaine.

JEFFREYS/STERLING

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ner and nod off. But when we understood what his problem was—first of all, his age, and then he had a wife who was very ill—it just became a love affair between the three of us. We loved Leo and Lee Patrick, who played Henrietta Topper, and our directors. They were just great people. And we had quality writing. Some time after the *TOPPER* series, I was in New York and they were opening the Broadway play *COMPANY*. I said, "Oh, boy, it's my night off! I'm going to go see *COMPANY*!" I just love Stephen Sondheim; I think he's such a great writer and musical man, and I wanted to meet him. So I went backstage and Stephen came over and said, "Anne, how are you? I'm so glad you came tonight! Do you remember me?" And I said, "Of course I know who you are, but I don't think we've met before." And he said, "I was a writer on *TOPPER*!" (Laughs)

SS: Wow! You know, we just interviewed Kathleen Freeman, who played Katie the maid.

AJ: She's a doll; we love Kathy. So funny! I see her once in a while. Terrific lady.

RS: I loved both Leo G. Carroll and Lee Patrick, too; they were very dear people.

SS: Robert, were the ghost effects done optically, or were different methods used?

RS: There was one method. It was much easier for them to have us freeze rather than do it optically. Doing it optically cost a lot of money.

SS: So they would photograph you standing still, and then rewind the film in the camera?

RS: Right.

SS: Didn't that make for a tough shoot?

RS: Sometimes it did. Sometimes I'd run out of patience.

SS: Anne, you and Robert had another short-lived series together, called *LOVE THAT JILL*.

AJ: I think we made 11 or 12 of them, and we were very unhappy because it did a complete turn to slapstick. It was silly, and we didn't like it at all, so we never did 13. We walked out on it—or rather Robert walked and, of course, he pulled me with him.

SS: Robert, you appeared in *RETURN TO PEYTON PLACE* in 1961, several years after the original novel, Peyton Place, had caused such a furor. Did any of the notoriety of the book carry over to the film?

RS: None.

SS: *RETURN TO PEYTON PLACE* was directed by Jose Ferrer, who helmed a few films, but generally directed on the stage.

RS: Oh, he was very good, I thought. A bright man, and he did enough films that he knew what the hell was going on. I liked Joe.

SS: That same year you appeared in *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA* with Walter Pidgeon, Peter Lorre, and Joan Fontaine.

RS: I loved Peter—he was a sweet man—and I loved Walter. Walter and I were friends for years. A nice guy. I can't say much for Miss Fontaine.

SS: You hear stories about Peter Lorre in his later years, and how he would ignore the script and ad lib his way through some films. Did he do this on *VOYAGE*?

RS: Possibly, but I don't know. If he did ad lib, I didn't realize it.

SS: Were you asked to do the TV version?

RS: I was, and I think I made a mistake, financially, turning it down. I should have done it. But...what the hell! (Laughs)

SS: Did you just not want to take another series on at that time?

RS: That's right.

SS: And you didn't get thank-you notes from David Hedison every payday?

RS: No. Maybe I should have! (Laughs)

SS: Anne, are you still appearing on *GENERAL HOSPITAL*?

AJ: Every once in a while. I did three in January. My character isn't really doing anything. For a while, there, I was working four and five days a week. You get a storyline going, but then they go off on another storyline and so you just come in and out whenever that character is needed. For the past five years they haven't really had a storyline for me, as the prominent socialite in Port Charles. So I wouldn't say that I was burning up the tubes with that! (Laughs)

SS: Robert, after leaving acting, you specialized in computers. You must have been one of the first computer experts in the world!

RS: I got into it very early, but then I got out—I made another mistake financially. Anyway, it was fun; I enjoyed it.

SS: You mentioned *GOLDEN BOY*, but were there other roles you really wanted but lost?

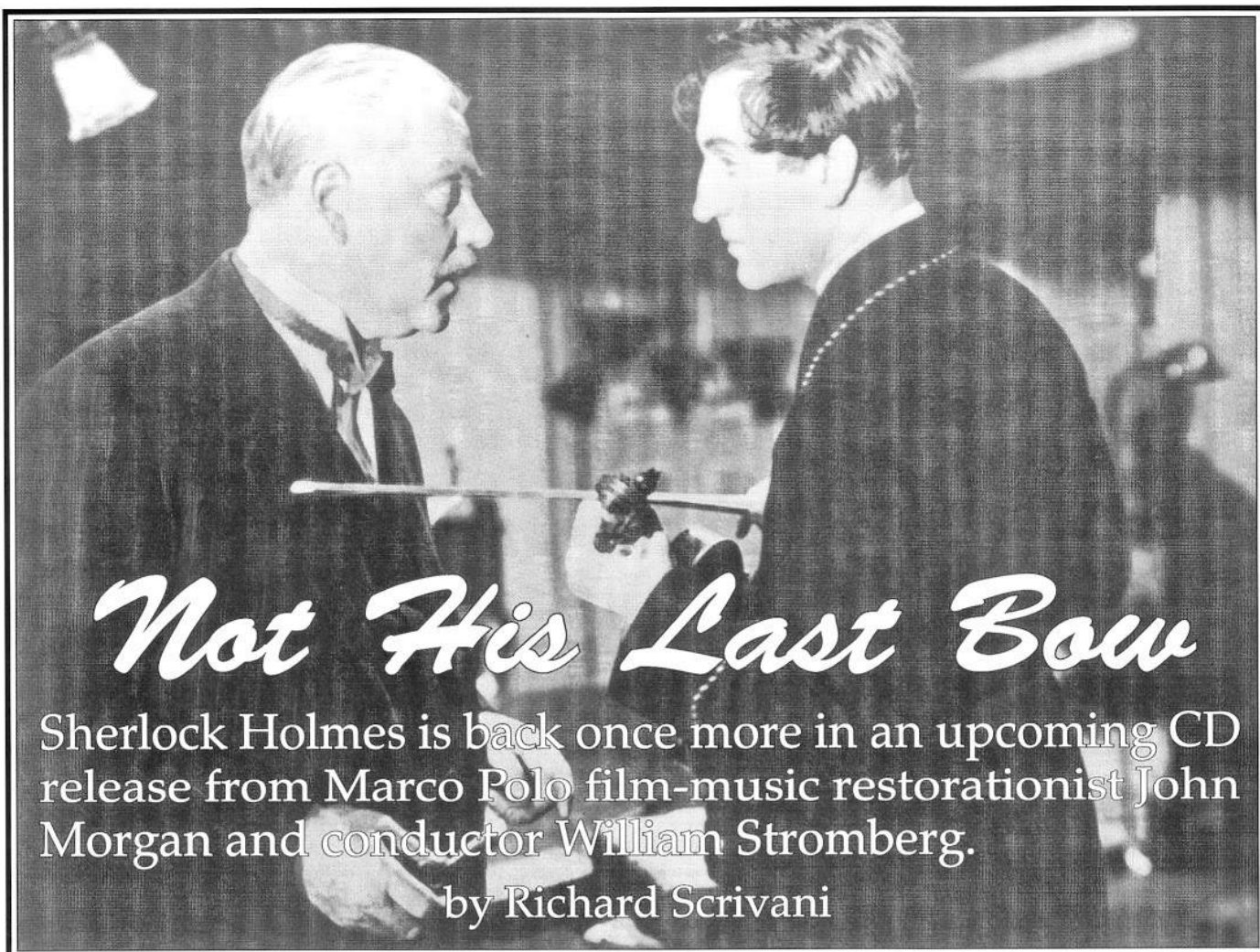
RS: The other disappointment I had was when I didn't get the part of Biff in the original stage production of *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*. They talked about me for that role, but then they decided to cast somebody with more stage experience than I had.

SS: That was in 1949?

RS: Yeah. And I loved that script; it was a wonderful script.

SS: Anne, what do you believe has been the high point of your career?

AJ: It would be hard to say. I've been lucky to do so many things. But I'm still looking for a great part in a picture with a great director!



Not His Last Bow

Sherlock Holmes is back once more in an upcoming CD release from Marco Polo film-music restorationist John Morgan and conductor William Stromberg.

by Richard Scrivani

Back in 1994, Scarlet Streeters were treated to a banquet of a unique kind. Music from Universal's most famous and beloved horror films, overlooked through the previous decades of symphonic film-score restoration, surfaced via the Marco Polo label. We sat huddled around our various sound systems (hopefully on a cold and windy night), swept away as suites from *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1939), *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS* (1940), *THE WOLF MAN* (1941), and *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1942) reminded us how much we owed to composers Hans J. Salter, Frank Skinner, and Charles Previn for adding aural shadings to our childhood nightmares. As if that wasn't enough, the entire score to *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944, composed by Salter with a little help from his friend Paul Dessau) was added to the cache the following year.

For the painstaking reconstruction of these scores, (lost to the ages save for piano portfolios filed for copyright purposes), one man deserves credit: John Morgan, a Los Angeles-based film composer whose own work include scores for *THE AFTERMATH* (1982), *DEMON IN THE BOTTLE* (1996), and *TRINITY AND BEYOND* (1995, this last a collaboration with William Stromberg). In the restoration department, Mr. Morgan's work for Marco Polo has stretched to over a dozen CDs, many of them devoted to the works of the great Max Steiner, but including the likes of Victor Young (1944's *THE UNINVITED*), Bernard Herrmann (1954's *GARDEN OF EVIL*, 1955's *PRINCE OF PLAYERS*), Alfred Newman (1939's *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*), and Philip Sain-ton's sweeping score for *MOBY DICK* (1956).

But now it's time to journey back down that familiar dark road that leads to the land of classic mystery and horror. A new two-CD project is slated for release in early 2000,

this time touching on one of this magazine's favorite literary characters. That's right—we are finally about to thrill to the themes written by Frank Skinner for *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE VOICE OF TERROR* (1942), the first entry in the popular Universal series. This same CD will pay another visit to Vasaria with a brand new take on *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN*, with more cues and better attention paid to tempo and pace than in the earlier Andrew Penny CD.

The second CD will be devoted to Roy Webb, resident composer at RKO in the forties, and chief supplier of orchestral moods for the Val Lewton horror films. We'll be hearing a broad sampling of his music from *CAT PEOPLE* (1942), *THE SEVENTH VICTIM* and *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* (both 1943), *THE BODY SNATCHER* (1945), and *BEDLAM* (1946), in a recording that will mark the first time Webb's horror-movie scores have been played by a modern orchestra. Recording the Webb cues led to an interesting challenge for Morgan:

"One of the hardest things for me, being associated with all these great scores normally done with gigantic orchestras, was to keep fighting a tendency to overwrite or over-orchestrate. I mean, here you have an 87-piece orchestra in front of you and you want to give it the most. But I knew, especially with the Webb material, that, although you can have extra strings and such, you just can't add lines or take the chords and double them up octaves. I tried to make it a 'Chamber,' a very subtle and intimate sound."

The orchestra in question, ever since the Salter/Skinner sessions five years ago, had been the Moscow Symphony. However, it was feared that the political climate in Russia might be heated due to the United States and NATO's in-

volvement in Kosovo, so arrangements were made to record with the Slovak Radio Orchestra in Bratislava, a location used for several earlier Marco Polo projects. Morgan explains:

"With the war going on, we didn't think that Moscow would be quite as friendly, although we probably exaggerated, because they want us over there. We get along with the musicians and the people we work with, but they were doing a lot of demonstrating. We wanted to get these recordings done, so we had the choice of going over to Bratislava. I think we'll be going back to Moscow for the bigger recordings, but it was a very nice experience in Bratislava; the orchestra was good and the living conditions were wonderful. I like my comfort, I can tell you that! We went from Los Angeles to Vienna, and Bratislava is about 45 minutes by car out of Vienna. It was just a great trip. A lot of great music was written in the past there, including Haydn, and we visited the house where he was born. We stayed at a five-star hotel. They had this wonderful breakfast bar, all you could eat. We got up early when it opened and had tons of bacon—it was just a delight!"

Having that wonderful Sherlock Holmes music will be a delight of another kind. "In *VOICE OF TERROR*, I did all the original cues for that film by Frank Skinner. That was about 13 minutes of music. There were a couple of oddball cues that they tracked in from a 1941 film, *PARIS CALLING*, but basically I did all the original music, which became the sort of template for all the other Sherlock Holmes films. It's the only Holmes film that really has a thematic continuity, because you hear the main title music within some of the other cues. And that wonderful finale with the march, when Holmes and Watson are talking about England—they used a cutdown version of that march for a lot of the later films, when they're doing their England bit at the end. We also did the one original cue that Salter wrote in 1944 for *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE SPIDER WOMAN*, called 'The Spider.' That's that creepy cue when Holmes is pretending to lay in bed with the spider coming out of the vent. So we basically have 80 percent of the music from all 12 of the Universal Holmes films."

Morgan was asked whether there were any significant differences in the quality or makeup of the orchestras. "Well, not really, because we hire the number of players that we need, so we didn't do without. For example, if we needed four clarinets, we got them. For the Val Lewton we did a couple of vocal pieces. One was the zombies from *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE*. We hired four bass singers who were white, but they were singing that 'Old Maria' song because it's used as part of the underscoring and as part of the end titles. That came out quite nice. We found a

singer for the Scottish song in *THE BODY SNATCHER*, and again we thought it was important to have a portion of that song because it's used in the underscore. Ironically, we found this woman over there who couldn't speak English, but could do a Scottish accent singing English, so it kind of worked out."

Concerning the exclusion of the famous "Fort Holland Song" sung by Sir Lancelot in *ZOMBIE*, Morgan says, "No, we didn't do any of the Sir Lancelot stuff. It's too character oriented, and if you don't get that group to play it then it's silly to try to imitate it; it can't be done. It's like doing 'White Christmas' without Bing Crosby."

Scarlet Street asked Morgan why he had decided on a second recording of *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN*, since a large section of the score had already been recorded in 1992, with Andrew Penny conducting. "I was unhappy with the Penny version. I thought it could be better, plus they cut out some of the numbers that I had orchestrated. I didn't really have any direct communication with the conductor, and that was our very first album for Marco Polo. We had redone *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*; Bill Whitaker loves that film and he kind of nagged me into doing it, or I probably wouldn't have done it again. Then a few years after that, I said, 'Well, you know, we've gotta do *GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* so we can forget that early album.' Technically I did every cue from that film, but it's really a very repetitious score, so I judiciously edited a lot of the repetition. For instance, the little theme that you hear from *THE WOLF MAN* [the "stalking" theme, also known as "The Kill"] comes in about seven or eight times, so I didn't do it every time. Within the cues, I would take that out and stitch it together so you get a dramatic feeling of the whole score and what's happening in the film. There are places where I repeated—like when the Frankenstein Monster gets struck by the lightning in the neck. That's really just part of the main title, but it's a big, dramatic part, so Bill Stromberg conducted it a little faster to give it a little variation."



PAGE 52: Nigel Bruce and Basil Rathbone made their Universal debut as Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson in *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE VOICE OF TERROR* (1942), which updated the Great Detective's adventures to the Nazi-plagued forties. ABOVE: The "main title" music for *SON OF DRACULA* (1943). BELOW: Bill Stromberg rehearses with four "zombie singers" hired to record the Roy Webb score for *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* (1943).





LEFT: Bill Stromberg and the musicians prepare to record the music of Roy Webb, Hans J. Salter, and Frank Skinner. **RIGHT:** Jessica Holland (Christine Gordon) and Betsy Connell (Frances Dee) meet the zombie Carrefour (Darby Jones) in the Val Lewton classic *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* (1943).

Stromberg was also given the green light to interpret the different cues as music, while remaining as true to the spirit of the film as possible. Says John Morgan, "I didn't sit there with a stopwatch or anything, but Bill familiarized himself enough with the film. He loves *GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* and the Sherlock Holmes films, so he certainly knew that music. Some of *GHOST* moves at such a dead pace without the visuals, so he knew he was going to take some things a little more uptempo in order to give it some musical feeling instead of it being so lumbering. That's perfect for the Monster, but you've gotta get some kind of a forward propulsion in the music. And of course, it's written so well by Salter; it's built into the music. Bill followed the tempos, but made it musical without being a slave to every frame of the film."

There will be a few extras from Universal films of the forties for good measure. "We still had some time on the album and I wanted to give the fans as much alternate stuff as possible. I had some oddball conductor parts from a couple of cues ["Corky" and "Electro-Biology"] from *MAN MADE MONSTER* and one ["Hypnosis"] from *BLACK FRIDAY*, so we did those and the main title from *SON OF DRACULA*. It was all just what we had; a lot of it is gone, even the conductor parts. It's just cues I got from Hans, and he only had a couple of cues from this and that film. So I said, 'Well, I got 'em; I might as well do 'em!' They're really just little extras or bonuses; they're in no way representative of the

complete score. *SON OF DRACULA* is a wonderful score, but I've thought some day of doing *SABOTEUR*, and that has a lot of the good *SON OF DRACULA* music in it. We're pretty well scraping the Universal stuff clean! Between David Schecter at Monstrous Movie Music and our recordings, we can get rid of the Dick Jacobs *THEMES FROM HORROR MOVIES* album!"

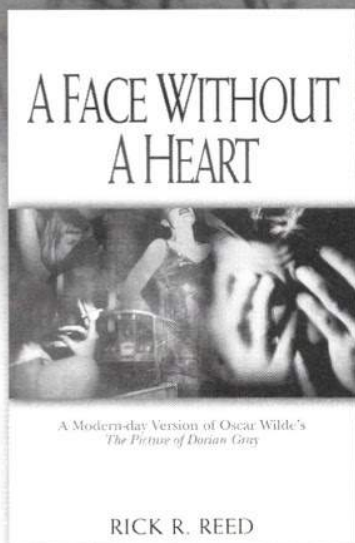
The arduous task of "rescuing" these music cues for the ages seems Herculean to most laymen. "Unfortunately, the studios threw out most of the original scores. With the Salter and Skinner material, I managed through Hans Salter and a couple of other means to get the conductor books, which necessitated reorchestrating everything. For the Roy Webb CD, there was Christopher Palmer. He's dead, now, but he was a fine reconstruction person who worked with Charles Gerhardt and did a lot of stuff for film music in the sixties and seventies. He knew Roy Webb and collected a lot of conductor sketches from him. When Chris Palmer died, he left all the Roy Webb material to Syracuse University, so I was able to get copies. Then by listening carefully to the tracks, I was able to orchestrate it—hopefully authentically. We have conductor parts, which are no better than a piano part. I try to put down on tape whatever we have available from the film soundtrack or acetates, to know what the suite is going to be, and then by listening to the tape over

Continued on page 76

LEFT: *Frankenstein's Monster* (Lon Chaney Jr.) hands Cloestine (Janet Ann Gallow) over to her father, Hussman (Olaf Hytten), in *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1942). **RIGHT:** John Morgan tickles the ivories.



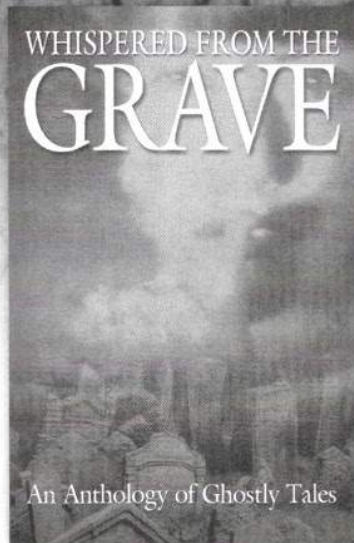
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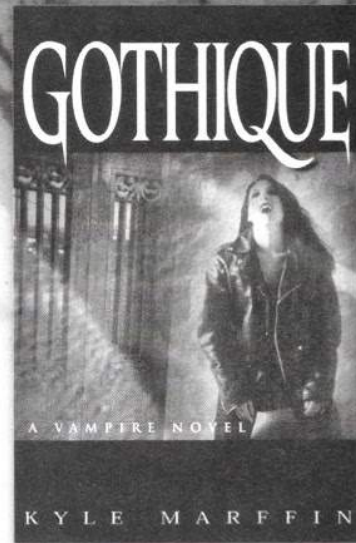
A stunning retake on Wilde's timeless themes of sin, guilt and despair, set amidst a nightmarish world of urban decadence.



WHISPERED FROM THE GRAVE

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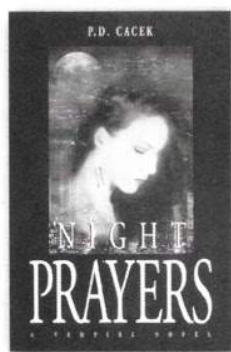
Fifteen provocative tales of ghosts and hauntings, of desire and revenge from beyond the grave. Featuring David Silva, Barry Hoffman, Nancy Kilpatrick, P.D. Cacek and others.



GOTHIQUE

Kyle Marffin
1-891946-06-4

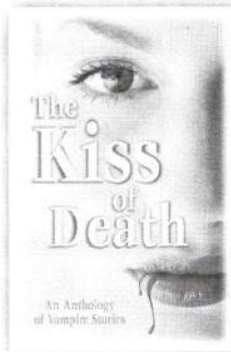
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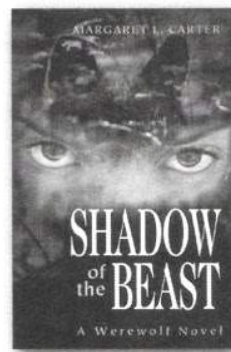
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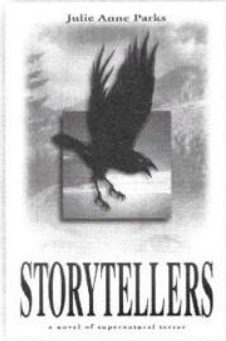
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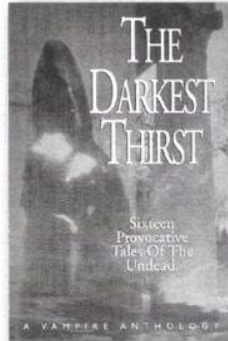
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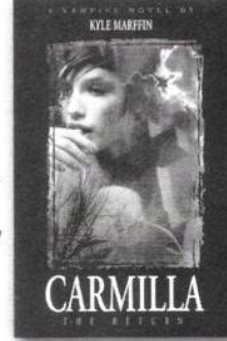
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Fly on the Wall **Kathleen Freeman**

interviewed by
Chris Pustorino

Last issue, *Scarlet Street* featured the lively first installment of our interview with comic actress extraordinaire Kathleen Freeman, discussing her roles in the TV sitcom TOPPER and the sci-fi classics THE MAGNETIC MONSTER (1953) and THE FLY (1958). Here, in the conclusion, Kathleen tells all about working with such comic geniuses as Jerry Lewis, Mae West, John Belushi, Charlie Chaplin—and John “Duke” Wayne . . . !

Scarlet Street: Since your first appearance with Jerry Lewis in 1955's *ARTISTS AND MODELS*, he has utilized your talents repeatedly in his films.

Kathleen Freeman: It reflects what I was saying earlier about the stock company. In fact, one time he said, “I’m going to do this movie without you”—then, about four days later, he called up and said, “You’re in the first shot tomorrow.” (Laughs)

SS: Are the two of you good friends?

KF: Oh, yeah! We’ve been friends for quite a number of years. In fact, I just went to Vegas and saw him do his first performing there in almost 11 years! He was wonderful! He’s really quite something and I genuinely value our friendship.



PAGE 56: Character actors have always been known for carrying a film's star, but Kathleen Freeman has carried things too far with Jerry Lewis in *THE LADIES' MAN* (1961). **ABOVE:** As Microwave Marge in Joe Dante's *GREMLINS 2: THE NEW BATCH* (1990), Kathleen found an unwelcome visitor in her appropriately-named tuna noodle surprise.

SS: His 1963 hit, *THE NUTTY PROFESSOR*, a takeoff on Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, is considered by many to be his best picture. Do you agree?

KF: It's bloody good! It works! I mean, you can see it today and it's definitely marketable right now. That's a big measure of something being awfully, awfully good. For instance, *SINGIN' IN THE RAIN*, which is almost 50 years old, could be released today and it would work now. When a movie works—it works! And so is the case with *THE NUTTY PROFESSOR*. In fact, I think it may just end up being considered Jerry's magnum opus. It's innovative, and the turning around of the Jekyll and Hyde story was, I think, extraordinarily clever. It's just great!

SS: How would you describe Jerry Lewis as a director?

KF: For me, Jerry Lewis was absolutely wonderful—and for the same reasons I said earlier: a person in full support. If you're in full support from somebody, it really frees you to do what you do. We did an enormous amount of improv throughout all those years. The ideas were all scripted, of course, but we just took off from there. In terms of directing, Jerry did a lot of things that were otherwise unprecedented. For instance, the first picture that he's credited for writing, producing, directing, and starring in was *THE LADIES' MAN*, back in 1961. I

played Katie, the maid. He did a lot of now legendary things in that picture, things like creating camera shots that other experts in the world told him couldn't be done. But, he did them anyway—and they all worked. He had one moment in the film where all the ladies were waking up in the morning and coming down to the dining room to have breakfast. Well, he put the whole thing to music. Everybody had to march in tune to the music, in different segments, etc., all the way down to the kitchen. It was all very well choreographed and quite delightful—but terribly, terribly difficult to do! I mean, you've got this three-story house and you're panning the camera from one room to the next one, to the next one—and the first guy that goes wrong, you have to start all over! Well, there were 33 women in that film and we all were having a big struggle with it. But, we kept working it and working it—it was just enormously complicated! At one point, Jerry was running the camera himself—but, even then, it still went wrong! He finally lowered the crane and got down, and was really rather angry by this time. He yelled, "All right! We're going to keep on doing this until it looks absolutely—spontaneous!" (Laughs) Yet, in the end, it actually turned out to be quite a lovely little moment in the film. But, my lord!

SS: Did you happen to hear about the comment Jerry Lewis made at a recent awards ceremony, when he was asked to name his favorite female comedian?

KF: Oh, yeah! Something about women being nothing but baby-making machines. I think a lot of people are probably angrier than hell with him! (Laughs)

SS: But why do you think he'd say something like that?

KF: I have no idea! I have no idea! I really don't! But I don't think I would say anything to him about it. The truth is, if that is legitimately his opinion, then that's the way it is. It's unpopular as hell, especially nowadays with so many women—standing up, as it were. (Laughs) My reaction to things like that is rather—benign. I just say, "Okay," because it doesn't change anything in the world. Doesn't do anything good, doesn't do anything bad. And, frankly, I'm still going to love him anyway!

SS: Moving forward—in 1990, you appeared as Microwave Marge...

KF: Ah, yes! *GREMLINS 2!* Working with yet another director I adore!

SS: Joe Dante, you mean.

KF: Joe has an enormous respect for the history of the business. He has an incredible memory for God the hell knows what! He was telling me about stuff I'd done that I'd forgotten completely! That, in itself, gives you a sense that you're



LEFT: Kathleen has always been a great favorite of Jerry Lewis, who featured her in no less than 11 of his films, including *THE LADIES' MAN* (costarring Helen Traubel) and his classic *THE NUTTY PROFESSOR* (PAGE 59). In turn, Kathleen has been a loyal friend. **RIGHT:** Kathleen joined John Wayne, John Qualen, and Capucine when they headed *NORTH TO ALASKA* in 1960.

dealing with someone who just might have at least one foot on the ground! (Laughs) I think Joe is excellent; I think he's a really wonderful director!

SS: *Who is your favorite director, or is that an unfair question?*

KF: That's hard. Different situations, different times—I value most of the people I've worked with very highly. I have an inordinate amount of respect for the visual capabilities of a really fine director. And there's lots of them. Like I say, I haven't had the chance to work with some of the newer ones—but I'm here and available! (Laughs) It's really hard for me to pick favorites, though. Frank Tashlin was certainly one of my favorites, and so was Jerry Lewis. Then, too, I had the extremely unique pleasure—as a youngster in this business—of working with Charles Chaplin.

SS: *Chaplin, too?*

KF: Yes. It was in the late forties. I hadn't started working in pictures yet, and he came to our theaters and directed several things. So that ranks pretty high up on the

marks! It was sort of sad, too—because, by this time, Chaplin was totally unpopular. It was an interesting time to start your career, when we had the country deciding a lot of strange things. A lot of very bad stuff happened to an awful lot of people, and all because of an egomaniac. Some people in government—then and now, and probably eternally—are always seeking to make themselves the head of whatever it is by killing off other people.

SS: *You're referring, of course, to Senator Joe McCarthy.*

KF: Oh, you bet! I'll never forget the wonderful lawyer Joseph Welch who, while in the midst of such deep indignation over this man, finally said, "Have you no shame, sir? At long last—have you no shame?" People died over this stuff! People died over that man and his activities! Hitler wasn't a good dude either, but this was the same kind of stuff! As far as I'm concerned, people who rate themselves by trashing any other group or set of people are immediately off my list.

There's something wrong with them! There's something very deficient in thinking the only way you can become a force is by killing off other people. They're sick! They're mad! And the irony of it all is that these people never actually kill off the ideas or whatever it is that they hate so! The encouraging thing, I think, is that there must be much more power for good out there—otherwise the balance would have long been finished. There's an incredible amount of unbelievably treasurable people who are doing a lot of powerful good in the world. That's why I love doing comedy. I think, if you give somebody a laugh, you've given them the best of the world.

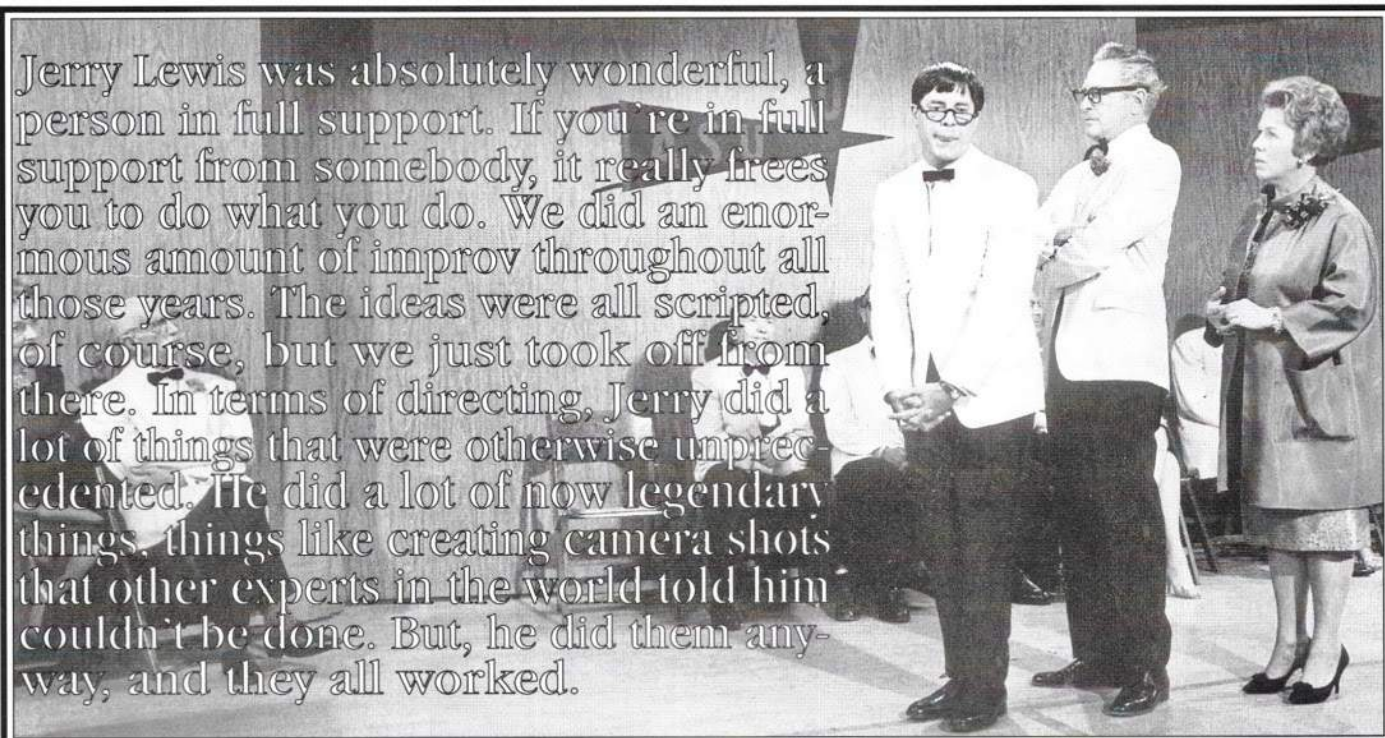
SS: *That's a wonderful philosophy. This is quite a shift in topic, but dare we mention a notorious movie you made in 1970: namely, MYRA BRECKINRIDGE?*

KF: (Laughs) That's a funny story! Speaking for myself, when a job comes my way, I usually want to do it. I love what I do, and I love to do it well. But sometimes, when you get behind in the car payments

LEFT: Kathleen cuts a mean rug with another legendary star: Henry Fonda in *THE ROUNDERS* (1965). **RIGHT:** Sister Mary Stigmata was a showstopping role for Kathleen, and she handily stole *THE BLUES BROTHERS* (1980) from stars John Belushi and Dan Ackroyd.



Jerry Lewis was absolutely wonderful, a person in full support. If you're in full support from somebody, it really frees you to do what you do. We did an enormous amount of improv throughout all those years. The ideas were all scripted, of course, but we just took off from there. In terms of directing, Jerry did a lot of things that were otherwise unprecedented. He did a lot of now legendary things, things like creating camera shots that other experts in the world told him couldn't be done. But, he did them anyway, and they all worked.



or whatever the hell it is, and a job just happens to come up at the same time and you're asked to do it—even though it might be something you're not that interested in—you accept it for economic reasons, if nothing else. This was one such case. I found out that Mae West was going to be playing the agent in the film, and, although I'd only met her once, I knew one thing: if Mae West is going to be in the movie, then nobody else is going to be funny. I thought, "Even if I do the job, there's no way I'm going to end up in the final cut! And, even if I do, there's certainly no way I'm going to be funny!" Well, on the opening day of the picture, my phone was ringing off the hook with people saying, "What the hell are you doing in this piece of trash?" I was astonished that there was even one shot of me anywhere in the thing! But, there was, of a bunch of ladies playing poker. I was one of the ladies, but I don't think I had any dialogue. So, I'd answer these calls by saying, "I got paid for it, okay?! I got paid for it!" (Laughs) But I genuinely thought I wouldn't end up in the picture at all!

SS: In 1980, you appeared as Sister Mary Stigmata in John Landis' cult classic, *THE BLUES BROTHERS*.

KF: Oh, I had a wonderful time doing it! I thought it was a very funny role, and I thought Mr. Landis was dandy. I really like him a lot. He had a brilliant idea on the exit of my character, by having her disappear into the room. I think it's a real gem!

SS: So, that was John Landis' idea? How was it actually done?

KF: How was it done? Should I tell secrets like that?

SS: Oh, sure!

KF: (Laughs) Well, it was a brilliant notion, I think. We worked very, very well together. I suggested we do more of the Kung Fu stuff, and he agreed—so, from

just a little smack on the shoulder, it turned into a battle royale! It was wonderful! The lovely shot over the head, with me swinging the sword around—like in Tai Chi or whatever it is—it was all great, and certainly that exit is just Heaven! It's like God pulling her back!

SS: No way you're going to tell us how it was done, eh?

KF: (Laughs) Well, I think one of the great things about all this stuff—is the mystery.

SS: You've witnessed a lot of changes take place in both movies and TV over the years. What do you think of these mediums today?

KF: Well, it's always been a young business, but I think, as soon as the people running the business today realize that the full spectrum of life is no longer being used, that they're cutting off half the nation from participating in their shows or movies, it'll change. Half the people in this country are 50-plus years of age. We're no longer a teenage country. If the only thing the powers-that-be are interested in is the 18 to 30 age group, then they're cutting off half the country. That doesn't sound like good business to me. When some fool finally figures it out, then we'll get some more gray hair out there and we'll ultimately have the participation of a full spectrum of life—which is what they used to do when I was a kid. There was no danger in being a character actor because you could do it all your life—which, of course, I'm going to do, anyway! People think I'm an optimist supreme, but I really believe life is cyclical, and I believe somebody who'll be in a position to do something about it will eventually figure this out.

SS: What have been your favorite experiences working in films and television?

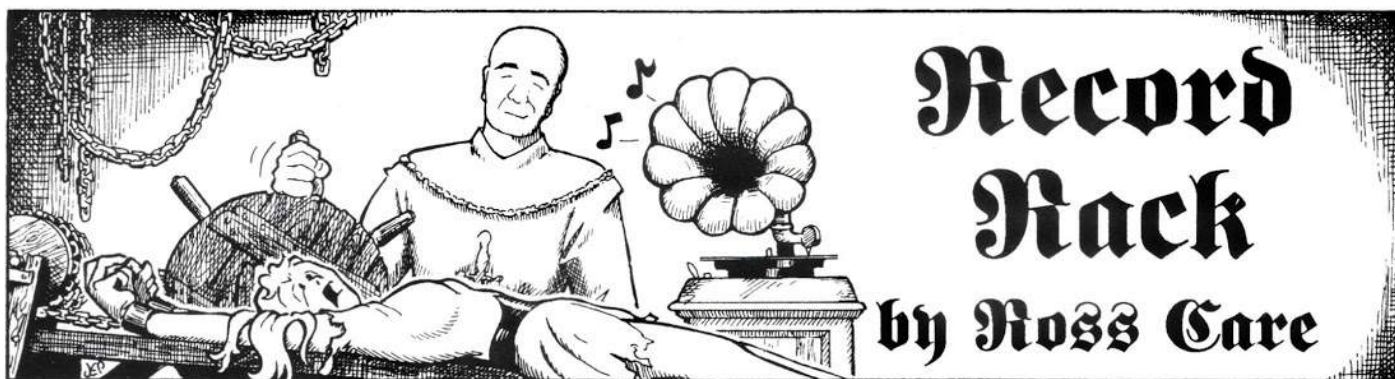
KF: I really can't designate two or three things because, to tell you the truth, everything I've ever done I've given the best I had at that time. So it's difficult to

pick out what was great and what wasn't—and blah, blah, blah. Of course, there are ones that I really love—like *SINGIN' IN THE RAIN*—as well as some recent TV shows that I've done. And I love almost all the material I did with Jerry Lewis, especially *THE DISORDERLY ORDERLY*. I had a great part in that as the lunatic nurse. Then, of course, I also had a great time with John Wayne, too, working on *NORTH TO ALASKA*. That was just wonderful—playing his Swedish friend. But, I tell you, I was doing an interview recently and was asked about this same subject. When they asked me what was really my favorite, I said, "The next one." I know it's already been said by someone else, but that is the truth of it. Whatever's next is what knocks me out. I can hardly bitch and moan about my life. I've had some really wonderful parts in some really terrific movies, but I always look at the next one as being even more fun—and even more wonderful.

SS: You've had an incredible career, Kathleen, spanning more than fifty years—with appearances in countless television shows and movies—and close to 120 feature films. Do you ever think about retiring, or is it simply out of the question?

KF: Well, the way I look at it—cats and dogs don't retire, birds don't retire, nothing in nature retires! If you're incapable of carrying on, then that's a different story. Otherwise, it just doesn't make sense. Why would you retire? Because you've got white hair instead of long locks and leather pants? I don't think there's any retirement when you're in an art form. For instance, Spencer Tracy gave one of his greatest performances—the last one he ever did—while he was very ill. He knew all along the kind of astronomical energy this whole thing takes. And how about all the years of practice that each actor goes

Continued on page 78



A Rozsa by Any Other Name

After scoring his first film in 1937, and moving through his forties exotic fantasy (1940's *THIEF OF BAGDAD*), psychological (1945's *SPELLBOUND*), and noir (1944's *DOUBLE INDEMNITY*) periods, Miklos Rozsa signed an exclusive contract with MGM in 1949 and emerged as the definitive musical chronicler of the History Of The World according to fifties Hollywood. At Metro, Rozsa underscored everything from the birth of Christ (twice, no less, in 1959's *BEN-HUR* and 1961's *KING OF KINGS*), to the crossing of the Mayflower (1952's *PLYMOUTH ADVENTURE*) and post-nuclear devastation in New York City (1959's *THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL*).

MGM was just entering its own period of devastation when Rozsa signed on. Classic Hollywood was finally being deconstructed by the government antitrust suits of the late forties, but MGM resolutely persisted in grinding out its lavish historical programmers as if the old-order studio system was not going to pieces around it. While Rozsa obviously scored many mega films of the period, among them the surprisingly sadistic (for MGM) *QUO VADIS?* (1951) and *BEN-HUR*, he provided music for his share of Metro obscurities as well. An overview of his contributions to both extremes of the vast MGM oeuvre can be found in the recent *MIKLOS ROZSA AT MGM*, a two-disc anthology from Rhino/Turner Classic Movies Music.

This collection spans the maestro's work from Vincente Minnelli's superb *MADAME BOVARY* (1949) to Nick Ray's odd *KING OF KINGS* a little over a decade later. Due to Rhino's previous and definitive two-disc set on *BEN-HUR*, nothing from that film is included, but a 13.00 suite from *KING OF KINGS* is heard. Ensuing historical superstars musically evoked range from King Arthur and Company (an 11.59 track from 1953's *KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE*) to Diane de Poitiers and Vincent Van Gogh (*DIANE* and *LUST FOR LIFE*, both made in 1956).

While much fifties MGM might be considered the decadence of the studio system, I've always had a soft spot for the era. I saw many of these epics during the last days of one of my favorite movie theaters, Loew's Regent in Harrisburg, Penn-

sylvania. (It was soon to be razed in the wake of the era's government trust busting, thus launching the first of many



The one that got away! Although Miklos Rozsa scored more than his fair share of Biblical epics, he somehow missed out on Lana Turner in *CLAMS ON THE HALF-SHELL*—uh, that is to say, *THE PRODIGAL* (1955)

movie-related traumas endured during my overwrought, Hollywood-obsessed childhood.) That the scores for several of these films first experienced at the Regent turn up here adds a touch of poignancy to this compilation for me, I must admit.

One of the most enjoyable suites is from a 1954 CinemaScope obscurity, *GREEN FIRE*, about emerald hunting in South America. This is probably the only instance when Rozsa gave in to the title-tune mania of the period, and it's fascinating to hear the MGM mixed chorus and symphony rise to delirious Rozsaesque heights on the lyrics: "Like love and burning desire there's magic in Green Fire, *Green Fire!!!*" in the Main Title. (It's a great tune, too, and I'm always intrigued when essentially classical composers, which Rozsa certainly was, go Pop). While Rozsa was obviously a bril-

liant composer's composer, there's a certain sameness to his music as well, and *GREEN FIRE* provides a welcome digression from the generally portentous goings on. Other rarities include *VALLEY OF THE KINGS* (1954), an excursion into period Egyptology, and *THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL*, an atomic-age message pic with a sleek Main Title.

How Rozsa managed to avoid scoring that ultra-camp Biblical epic, *THE PRODIGAL* (1955), is one of the mysteries of Hollywood musicology—maybe he simply refused—but, speaking of which, it would be wonderful to have at least one disc of the music of Rozsa's lyrical (if somewhat underrated) MGM compatriot Bronislau Kaper as well. The format employed in *MIKLOS ROZSA AT MGM*, providing an anthology of agreeably concise but representative (and mostly stereo) suites from a variety of vintage films by one composer, is a welcome and immensely enjoyable one. I sincerely hope Rhino/Turner will apply it to other film composers as well.

SHE and LOST HORIZON

I should start off by admitting that neither Max Steiner nor Dimitri Tiomkin head my personal subjective list of Favorite Film Composers of All Time. While both composed some luscious melodies, I find Steiner somewhat generic, and Tiomkin often just plain weird. That gut-wrenching confession aside, I also recognize their credentials as two of the great pioneers of classical Hollywood scoring, while Steiner himself might be viewed as the father of it all. Both were among the six cinemusical giants honored with Legends of American Music U.S. stamps with the first block in the recent Hollywood Composers series.

At any rate, Brigham Young University's Film Music Archives Productions has released two authentic Steiner/Tiomkin classics from that formative era when Hollywood scoring was just inventing itself, the thirties. Though I admire the wonderful 1935 version of *SHE*, it *does* primarily stick in my mind for its title character being the inspiration for the design of the Wicked Queen in Disney's *SNOW WHITE* (1937)—see the back page of the BYU liner booklet—and is somewhat eclipsed, at least in my mind, by the 1965 Hammer remake with one of the



LEFT: Though he'd been around Hollywood for a number of years, blue-eyed Jeffrey Hunter looked so youthful as the Son of God in *KING OF KINGS* (1961) that the film became popularly known as *I WAS A TEENAGE JESUS*. **RIGHT:** In 1937, moviegoers had been treated to a visit by another savior of mankind—the High Llama of Shangri-La (Sam Jaffe) in Frank Capra's *LOST HORIZON*. Also pictured: Ronald Colman as Robert Conway.

most gorgeous couples in genredom, Ursula Andress and John Richardson.

That said, admirers of the prolific Max Steiner (who scored 12 other pictures in 1935!) will find his classic score for the RKO version an apt companion piece to his well-loved *KING KONG* (1933). As the appropriately purple-hued liner notes comment: "Just as the film is built on the success of *KING KONG*, the theme for the character of She is an extension of Kong's Motif for the 1933 classic. However, the character of She's theme is completely deprogressive, climbing down the scale toward the pits of hell from where arose the Flame of Life that kept She alive through the centuries."

Whew, pretty hot stuff—but if you're susceptible to the charms of both Helen Gahagan's She (oddly named Haschamot-Tet instead of the Ayesha of H. Rider Haggard's 1887 novel and its several sequels) and Steiner's overwrought score, this complete release (derived primarily from the original RKO acetate discs) should light your own personal Flame of Life. The accompanying booklet has great period graphics, and fascinating notes that discuss Steiner's collaboration with German composer Bernhard Kaun, who had scored the original *FRANKENSTEIN* for Universal in 1931.

I have a sort of love/hate thing with Dimitri Tiomkin. The composer was actually born in Tsarist Russia, a favorite era of mine, and a period to which I credit the birth of modern cinefantastique music (with Tchaikowsky's brilliant cue for the battle between the nutcracker and the mice in his *NUTCRACKER* ballet). Russian composers are among my classical favorites, but I find Tiomkin bombastic (1951's *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN*), strange (1955's *LAND OF THE PHAROHS*, 1964's *FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE*), and sometimes, I must admit, genuinely stirring (1954's *THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY*, 1956's *GIANT*—and 1937's *LOST HORIZON*).

I first discovered his haunting music for *LOST HORIZON* on an old monophonic-only Paul Weston Columbia LP of film music, *LOVE MUSIC FROM HOLLYWOOD*, in the fifties, and have had a soft spot for the score ever since. It's full of haunting melodies and exotic atmosphere, and is scored for grandiose forces including batteries of percussion, harps, and pianos, a Hammond organ, and choir. (The versatile Hall Johnson Choir, the Negro ensemble who perform the "Tibetan" vocals, would shortly provide the voices of the black crows in Walt Disney's *DUMBO* in 1941! Their distinctive sound

in the "Entrance to Shangri-La" cue suggests an odd amalgam of Puccini's *TURANDOT* and Disney's *SONG OF THE SOUTH* (1946), for which they also provided the profuse choral tracks.) Nine orchestrators (including Hugo Friedhofer and Robert Russell Bennett) worked on various sections of the score.

If, as Bacharach and David once wrote for the ill-advised 1973 musical remake, "There's a *Lost Horizon* waiting to be found," look no further, this is definitely it. The BYU CD includes 26 cues and is assembled from a variety of period sources (including 78-rpms obtained from an internet auction!) to provide the first complete original soundtrack of Tiomkin's classic score as conducted by Max Steiner. The comprehensive, profusely illustrated booklets for both limited edition CDs make you wish they could somehow be blown-up to good old-fashioned (and more viewer friendly) 12-inch LP proportions. The sound is, of course, mono, but quite good considering the age and diversity of the source material. Cues and performances are most certainly AA+ (Absolutely Authentic).

Ross Care now lives in California, not far from the Ojai Valley which provided the location for the first panoramic long shot of Shangri-La in LOST HORIZON.

Coming Up in Scarlet Street!

Hurd Hatfield, *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*, Shane Briant, *THE RETURN OF DR. X*, Gene Evans, *THE SIGN OF FOUR*, Vincent Sherman, *DONOVAN'S BRAIN*, *THE BLACK CAT*, John Agar, *BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS*, Curt Siodmak, and much more!

PARAMOUNT HORRORS

THE 1940S

by Ken
Hanke

Stuart Heisler followed 1941's *THE MONSTER AND THE GIRL* with the lesser known, but in some ways superior, *AMONG THE LIVING* (also 1941), a film that, unfortunately, has been little seen, owing primarily to the lack of a supernatural agency or a name horror star. (The film's primary claim to fame on a casting level lies in featuring young Susan Hayward in a garish role.) The story very much continues the tabloid sensationalism of its two predecessors—*THE MONSTER AND THE GIRL* and *THE MAD DOCTOR* (1941 again)—and, in fact, ventures further into *les bas fonds* than they do. The screenplay by Lester Cole and Universal alumnus Garrett Fort is in itself a peculiar affair. It is clearly horrific in intent, but in a Southern Gothic manner—rather as if William Faulkner had written a thriller. Indeed, the film has more than a slight similarity to Stephen Roberts' *THE STORY OF TEMPLE DRAKE* (1933), Paramount's censorship compromised version of Faulkner's 1932 novel *Sanctuary*. It's an expose-styled story of family secrets, of the power of money and influence, of wife and child abuse, of class resentment—and yet all these elements are deftly combined by Heisler into what can only be classed as a very effective thriller. Atmosphere is the key to the film's success, and in this regard *AMONG THE LIVING* could scarcely be bettered. All of the scenes at the film's Old Dark House, Raden House, and its attendant family cemetery compare favorably with John Newland's classic "Pigeons From Hell" episode of *THRILLER*, which is certainly the ne plus ultra of southern-fried horror.

AMONG THE LIVING begins promisingly with a funeral (always a good start for a horror picture). Years after being shipped off to school, John Raden (Albert Dekker) has returned to town for his—very unlamented—father's funeral and to take his place as the head of the Raden Textile Mills. It is immediately obvious that things are not what they seem. No one has a good word to say about Raden the Elder and even his supposed friend, Dr. Ben Saunders (Harry Carey in a great performance), can pay only scant

respect, while being more concerned about the unexpected appearance of the family servant, Pompey (Ernest Whitman), on the fringe of the funeral. He engages Pompey in a cryptic conversation about having left the house untended and questions him as to how he got a cut on his face. "You know how," Pompey tells him, prompting Dr. Ben to remark, "Things can't go on like this." The things in question are not long in being revealed. Pompey returns to the house to take care of John's supposedly dead twin brother, Paul (also Dekker), who is hidden away in the cellar and restrained in a straitjacket. Paul, it seems, is a dangerously violent lunatic, obsessed with being sure that his much hated father has not been buried next to his beloved mother. (He believes that, if the man is buried next to her, he can "hurt her again.")

At this point, Dr. Ben turns over his great secret to John, showing him a drawing of the Benjamin Saunders' Hospital. "It's worth a good deal, don't you agree, John? Well, it's cost me a good deal—more than an ordinary man would care to pay. In exchange for your father's money, I performed a criminal act. I falsified a death certificate for your brother, Paul." Thus John learns that his legacy includes something less desirable than a fortune and a textile mill! "Paul's at Raden House?" asks John. (John is none too quick on the uptake.) "Yes, where your father and I have kept him hidden for 25 years—a hopeless maniac, and lately a dangerous one," the doctor informs him. On their way to the mansion, Dr. Ben asks, "Didn't you ever wonder why you were shipped away?" "Not particularly," responds the apparently uninquisitive prodigal. Since we, presumably, are more curious, Dr. Ben explains anyway: "Well, your father did that deliberately. You know your mother worshipped both of you boys and by sending one away to school and always threatening to send the other gave him the whip hand. He made her life miserable. One day little Paul heard her scream. He broke in and rushed at your father. Your father threw him across the room. From that

day on, Paul was different. One night I found him huddled against the edge of the fountain with his little hands pressed against his ears—to shut out her screams, he said. She'd been dead for two months. Even now that's how these attacks start—puts his hands to his ears. He still thinks he hears her screaming." Not a pretty picture—and it gets uglier very quickly when they find just how dangerous Paul has become. Arriving at Raden House, they find Pompey murdered—his hands to his ears, a look of horror on his face—and Paul gone. Further exploration reveals that the unhinged brother has exhumed his recently buried father to keep him from being next to his mother. (If nothing else, Paul is a singularly industrious loon.)

These scenes and the ones that follow are very finely accomplished, with a sense of gloomy foreboding enveloping them—and at least one genuine shock in the quick close-up of the murdered Pompey. Dr. Ben's subsequent encounter with Paul and his attempts to sedate him is perfectly gauged—keeping both characters strangely sympathetic throughout, which is no mean feat when one of them is a homicidal madman and the other a somewhat less than sterling specimen of the medical profession. (Despite the risks to anyone else, Dr. Ben refuses to go to the police because it will expose his ethical indiscretion.) It is immediately after this that the film takes a peculiar turn, moving away from the Gothic trappings of shadowy old rooms and creepy graveyards and into the daylight of the town as Paul ventures "among the living."

Paul's earliest wanderings in the town are cleverly staged in much the same manner that Paramount's Preston Sturges often used—long travelling shots that place the character firmly in his surroundings and imbue the film with a strong sense of place. In this case, however, the device serves to show how completely the character is *not* and *cannot* be one with his environment. He sticks out too much. He clearly doesn't belong. Everything that goes on around him baffles and strangely delights him. (When he isn't perceiving a threat or having an attack, Paul is played by Dekker as more simple-minded—in an OF MICE AND MEN Lennie fashion—than threatening.) It is only in the occasional isolated moment, such as the one in which he pauses to admire the handiwork of a knife-sharpener, that we are reminded of Paul's homicidal abilities.

In many ways, it's as if Paramount is straying very deliberately into Warner Bros. territory, but there is a notable and significant difference. Dealing with the lower classes, the Warners output was generally of a crusading nature—the audience was presumed to be identifying with and in sympathy with the characters. The studio is clearly on the side of a vaguely defined Working Man. Paramount's approach is something else again. Not to put too fine a line on it, the view of the common man is decidedly unflattering. These are interesting specimens, but the feeling is that they are best viewed humorously, from a distance, and almost definitely upwind! The "real" people who populate the little milltown of Raden are not only unglamorous, they

are not in any way admirable. Paul rents a room from Mrs. Pickens (the venerable Maude Eburne at her dowdy best), a woman of anything but charming attributes. She no sooner informs a Paul of her oversexed and trashy daughter, Millie (Susan Hayward), explaining that "Us Pickens have always had a weakness for refinements," than she pauses to dislodge her wayward undergarments from an apparently uncomfortable position on her anatomy! Nor is she above encouraging Millie to favor the obviously moneyed "Mr. Paul," all the while paying the most transparent lip service to morality. None of Paul's adventures in town are exactly designed to show society at its best, especially his encounter with yet another gold-digging female, Peggy Nolan (Jean Phillips, a sort of ultra-coarse Ginger Rogers), in a gin mill. Indeed, the major problem with one of the film's otherwise brilliantly achieved set pieces, the murder of Peggy Nolan,



Albert Dekker followed in the rather large footsteps of his own Dr. Cyclops portrayal (see previous page) by playing the mad Paul Raden and venturing forth **AMONG THE LIVING** (1941), where he murders the unfortunate Peggy Nolan (Jean Phillips).

is that the audience is hard pressed to view her removal from the world as anything more than "thinning the herd." The murder would otherwise have been a great moment in horror—the ever-increasing speed and closeness of the travelling shots as Paul pursues his quarry, finally stopping short as the figures disappear down a dark alley for the murder itself, is—like many of the thrills in *THE MONSTER AND THE GIRL*—decidedly Lewton-esque in its handling.

Not surprisingly, the unhappy citizens of Raden are incensed to find a killer in their midst. An absolutely insane decision on Dr. Ben's part to have John—blackmailed into keeping quiet by suggestions that insanity runs in some families and the very real fact that an exhumation of Paul's grave will disclose the decayed corpse of a 10-year-old, obtained God knows how—offer a \$5,000 reward for the capture of the murderer turns the entire town into a bloodthirsty mob. (This is splendidly conveyed in a breathtaking series of then uncommon swish pans, still startling today, that link the reaction vignettes.) In fact, the mob mentality—personified in Millie, who taunts Paul into going to Raden House with her to, ironically, search for him-

self—quickly becomes more disturbing than Paul's madness. When Millie realizes that she is actually in the company of the killer, all hell breaks loose and the expected happens—poor John gets mistaken for his murderous brother and soon finds himself at the mercy of mob "justice." The mob in this case has sufficient clout that they force the county judge (Harlan Briggs) to hold a "trial" on the spot in Raden House! John's only hope, of course, is for Dr. Ben to fess up—something he very nearly doesn't do until John's wife works on his conscience. (The utterly thankless role is played by Frances Farmer, herself only one film away from being driven off the screen by her *own* mental problems.) Even then, the town—implicitly more interested in stringing up a representative of the moneyed class than justice—is prepared to believe that the doctor has been paid to back up John's story, until John's flight from their "justice" leads them to Paul's corpse lying face down on their mother's grave. (Earlier, he was mortally wounded by one of Millie's friends.)



Much like *THE MONSTER AND THE GIRL*, the film does nothing at its end to soften its overall grimness (it's obvious that the law isn't going to turn a blind eye to Dr. Ben's shenanigans) and even adds one unforced little touch. When the "trial" gets too loud and out of control, sane brother John resorts to covering his ears—just like his lunatic brother. Well, Dr. Ben had suggested that insanity might run in the family . . .

If there is a single serious flaw in *AMONG THE LIVING*, it is probably in Albert Dekker's handling of Paul, which tends to be more than a little over the top. That is probably the actor's own response to the underwritten role of John, but in any case it isn't enough to keep the film from being a highly-charged example of B-picture horror, with something more on its mind than mere mayhem. *AMONG THE LIVING*, along with *THE MONSTER AND THE GIRL* and *THE MAD DOCTOR*, in some ways represents an approach to horror that prefigures the one launched by Val Lewton at RKO the next year. It's high time that these pioneering efforts in a more adult-minded approach to horror were recognized.

Paramount's Tabloid Trilogy proves interesting ground to explore from this vantage point, but the films did little at the time to convince the studio that the genre was worth further exploration. Lewton came along in 1942 and claimed the adult horror film for his own. Universal was busy churning out assembly-line terrors of a sort that only a studio with a built-in family of monsters could manage. From a commercial standpoint, Paramount had erred badly in the thirties by not establishing a line of specific studio monsters or stars. By 1942, it was too late in the day to do so. And so for a time, it seemed as if the studio was entirely out of the horror business—that is, until they opted to try first-time director Lewis Allen on what has often been cited as Hollywood's first serious attempt at a ghost story, 1944's *THE UNINVITED*. It was certainly a gamble. No expense was spared to bring this tale to the screen: it was a Paramount horror picture that actually looked like a Paramount Picture, with glossy production values, a name star, and a sumptuous Victor Young score. (True, he had scored *THE MAD DOCTOR*, but sparsely indeed.) *THE UNINVITED* was class all the way, and since big budgets and horror films rarely mix very well (chills and studio interference seem somehow an oil and water combination), the real surprise is that it all worked!

THE UNINVITED is everything it's cracked up to be—a surprisingly adult ghost story treated with utmost respect, and a good bit more. In adapting Dorothy Macardle's 1942 novel, *Uneasy Freehold*, to the screen, scripters Jack Partos and Dodie Smith injected undercurrents into the proceedings—infidelity, a frigid wife, suggested lesbianism, in-your-face lesbianism, attempted infanticide—that would



not have shamed its more overtly exploitative predecessors. All the elements are there, but they are handled so deftly by an absolutely perfect cast and Allen's sophisticated direction (he never made a film to equal this one) that they come across as tasteful. The seediness just beneath the surface passed almost unnoticed, by both the censors of the day and most audiences.

The film is so well known that its storyline scarcely bears repeating. Roderick "Rick" Fitzgerald (Ray Milland), a music columnist and aspiring composer, and his sister, Pamela (Ruth Hussey), pool their meager resources and buy an old seaside house that turns out to be haunted by an evil spirit seeking to destroy Stella Meredith (Gail Russell), whose grandfather (Donald Crisp) owns the property. On the off chance that there still exist persons in the civilized world who have never encountered this film, we will say no more about some of the plot's more intricate mysteries, since these are unraveled very cleverly as the film proceeds. (In-depth coverage can be found in *Scarlet Street* #12.)

By and large, *THE UNINVITED* succeeds on sheer conviction. It is a horror film that must be called restrained, but not in any negative sense of the word, because it never feels forced and the restraint actually enhances the movie's inherently spooky quality. There are only a very few special effects—limited to wilting flowers and the most satisfyingly wispy apparition a viewer could hope for, played by Lewton veteran Elizabeth Russell. It is left to the cast and the director to fill in the rest. Long after the excesses of more extrovert exercises in horror have been forgotten, one is haunted by the ghostly sound of the weeping woman echoing through the house at night, a lament dispelled by the equally memorable "dawn breeze" fluttering the curtains. The wonderful sequence in which Rick woos Stella by playing his composition, "Stella by Starlight," only to have the music suddenly turn sad and then frightening works just as well now as it must have then. The only really over-the-top aspects of the film are wisely saved for the very end, when all the threads tie together. Starting with the scene in which the Sapphically-minded Miss Holloway (Cornelia Otis Skinner) reveals her scheme to sacrifice Stella to the evil spirit of the woman with whom she was obviously in love, to the climactic showdown between Rick and the ghost on the stairs, *THE UNINVITED* never lets up on its finely wrought tension. Along with Robert Wise's *THE HAUNTING* (1963), *THE UNINVITED* is the high point in Hollywood's efforts to create a genuine ghost story.

Where *THE UNINVITED* had been restrained, Paramount's late 1944 release, *THE MAN IN HALF MOON STREET*, might more fairly be called constrained. Adapted from Barre Lyndon's play by genre specialist Garrett Fort and Charles Kenyon, directed by Ralph Murphy (who had done such a lively job with Paramount's 1935 thriller, *MEN-*



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ACE), and boasting a solid cast, this is a movie that nevertheless moves like it has a stick up its backside. It simply tries too damned hard to be classy. In the film's favor, the performances are good (though Helen Walker isn't about to fool anyone into believing she's English). Nils Asther brings just the right amount of wry humor to his role as the man with the artificially prolonged life, while Reinhold Schunzel is perfect as his supposedly younger partner in endocrinological tomfoolery. The story itself—of a man who has lived beyond his years thanks to gland transplants (obtained at the expense of the original owners)—is interesting enough, but the film is stodgy and Murphy does little to liven it up directorially. The opening is slightly unusual in that it offers characters addressing the camera and offering divergent viewpoints on Julian Karell (Asther)—an idea that may have been spawned by the trailer for 1941's *CITIZEN KANE* (which would make Murphy the only filmmaker ever influenced by Orson Welles via coming attractions). But after that, the film becomes more and more flatly executed. It is the sort of material that cries out for a director such as Albert Lewin, who, in fact, would demonstrate just how this type of film should be made the following year at MGM with *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*.

One marginally notable aspect of the film is the subtext inherent in the material concerning Karell's "rescue" of a suicidal young medical student (Morton Lowry). Everything about their dialogue and the very scandalized reactions of Karell's butler (Brandon Hurst) suggests—in this case incorrectly—that Dr. Karell has Oscar Wildean designs on the young man. It won't wash, but it is probably the most interesting thing in the film.

Less serious, less seriously intended, and a lot more fun is *ONE BODY TOO MANY* (1944), a lowercase Pine-Thomas production that wasn't made by Paramount, but was obviously made for them. (Hands up everyone who thinks it's coincidental that in a discussion on astrology a character notes that "the only stars that could influence my behavior would be Dorothy Lamour and Veronica Lake.") The movie is a late in the day variation on *THE CAT AND THE CANARY* (the dead millionaire is even named Cyrus), turned into a vehicle for Jack Haley. Haley plays nebbishy insurance salesman Albert Tuttle, who has finagled an appointment with Cyrus J. Rutherford, only to find his prospective client in a permanently horizontal position and himself mistaken for a detective assigned to watch the body. The whole thing is a bargain basement Bob Hope affair, with Haley standing in for Hope and Jean Parker subbing for Paulette Goddard. In fact, Haley even does the typical Hope shtick of letting his libido override his natural cowardice by opting to help Parker. It's workable. It's even enjoyable, except when the film gets a bad case of the cutes and has two sides of Haley's conscience argue with him, at which point

PAGE 64 LEFT: Paul Raden may be insane, but he's no fool. He knows how to track down his twin brother John (also played by Albert Dekker), who will soon find himself accused of committing murder. PAGE 64 RIGHT: Paul menaces Peggy before chasing her down and killing her. LEFT: Susan Hayward had one of her juiciest early roles in *AMONG THE LIVING* (1941), playing the sluttish, rabble-rousing Millie Pickens. BELOW: Dekker as the pathetic Paul Raden. it becomes cringe-worthy.

The film has a nicely atmospheric old dark house and an interesting screwball clause to the old boy's will. (The heirs—their names listed in a separate document to be opened after the terms of the will are carried out—are reversed if the astrologically bent Cyrus isn't "buried" above ground in a glass-domed vault so the stars can shine down on him.) Still, the real selling point today is third-billed Bela Lugosi in one of those butler roles studios liked to shoehorn him into when they wanted his name on the advertising. This time, however, the role is better than usual and his participation consists of something more than standard "This way, sir" dialogue. A patently self-serving and somewhat dishonest domestic (described in the will as "My faithful butler, Murkle, who for 20 years has padded the household bills"), Lugosi—teamed with Blanche Yurka as the housekeeper, Matthews—is given the film's most pleasant running gag. Early on, Matthews finds Murkle preparing coffee and holding a box of rat poison. "What have you got there, Murkle?" she asks suspiciously. "There are too many rats in this house. They should be done away with," he cryptically tells her, noting, "You haven't put out enough cups." Correcting her error, she inquires, "Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford—are they to have it too?" "All of them!" he responds with sinister meaning. He then spends the remainder of the film vainly trying to get anyone to drink the coffee (which must be very cold





PAGE 64 LEFT: Paul Raden may be insane, but he's no fool. He knows how to track down his twin brother John (also played by Albert Dekker), who will soon find himself accused of committing murder. **PAGE 64 RIGHT:** Paul menaces Peggy before chasing her down and killing her. **LEFT:** Susan Hayward had one of her juiciest early roles in **AMONG THE LIVING** (1941), playing the sluttish, rabble-rousing Millie Pickens. **BELOW:** Dekker as the pathetic Paul Raden.

it becomes cringe-worthy.

The film has a nicely atmospheric old dark house and an interesting screwball clause to the old boy's will. (The heirs—their names listed in a separate document to be opened after the terms of the will are carried out—are reversed if the astrologically bent Cyrus isn't "buried" above ground in a glass-domed vault so the stars can shine down on him.) Still, the real selling point today is third-billed Bela Lugosi in one of those butler roles studios liked to shoehorn him into when they wanted his name on the advertising. This time, however, the role is better than usual and his participation consists of something more than standard "This way, sir" dialogue. A patently self-serving and somewhat dishonest domestic (described in the will as "My faithful butler, Murkle, who for 20 years has padded the household bills"), Lugosi—teamed with Blanche Yurka as the housekeeper, Matthews—is given the film's most pleasant running gag. Early on, Matthews finds Murkle preparing coffee and holding a box of rat poison. "What have you got there, Murkle?" she asks suspiciously. "There are too many rats in this house. They should be done away with," he cryptically tells her, noting, "You haven't put out enough cups." Correcting her error, she inquires, "Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford—are they to have it too?" "All of them!" he responds with sinister meaning. He then spends the remainder of the film vainly trying to get anyone to drink the coffee (which must be very cold

ACE), and boasting a solid cast, this is a movie that nevertheless moves like it has a stick up its backside. It simply tries too damned hard to be classy. In the film's favor, the performances are good (though Helen Walker isn't about to fool anyone into believing she's English). Nils Asther brings just the right amount of wry humor to his role as the man with the artificially prolonged life, while Reinhold Schunzel is perfect as his supposedly younger partner in endocrinological tomfoolery. The story itself—of a man who has lived beyond his years thanks to gland transplants (obtained at the expense of the original owners)—is interesting enough, but the film is stodgy and Murphy does little to liven it up directorially. The opening is slightly unusual in that it offers characters addressing the camera and offering divergent viewpoints on Julian Karell (Asther)—an idea that may have been spawned by the trailer for 1941's *CITIZEN KANE* (which would make Murphy the only filmmaker ever influenced by Orson Welles via coming attractions). But after that, the film becomes more and more flatly executed. It is the sort of material that cries out for a director such as Albert Lewin, who, in fact, would demonstrate just how this type of film should be made the following year at MGM with *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*.

One marginally notable aspect of the film is the subtext inherent in the material concerning Karell's "rescue" of a suicidal young medical student (Morton Lowry). Everything about their dialogue and the very scandalized reactions of Karell's butler (Brandon Hurst) suggests—in this case incorrectly—that Dr. Karell has Oscar Wildean designs on the young man. It won't wash, but it is probably the most interesting thing in the film.

Less serious, less seriously intended, and a lot more fun is *ONE BODY TOO MANY* (1944), a lowercase Pine-Thomas production that wasn't made by Paramount, but was obviously made for them. (Hands up everyone who thinks it's coincidental that in a discussion on astrology a character notes that "the only stars that could influence my behavior would be Dorothy Lamour and Veronica Lake.") The move is a late in the day variation on *THE CAT AND THE CANARY* (the dead millionaire is even named Cyrus), turned into a vehicle for Jack Haley. Haley plays nebbishy insurance salesman Albert Tuttle, who has finagled an appointment with Cyrus J. Rutherford, only to find his prospective client in a permanently horizontal position and himself mistaken for a detective assigned to watch the body. The whole thing is a bargain basement Bob Hope affair, with Haley standing in for Hope and Jean Parker subbing for Paulette Goddard. In fact, Haley even does the typical Hope shtick of letting his libido override his natural cowardice by opting to help Parker. It's workable. It's even enjoyable, except when the film gets a bad case of the cutes and has two sides of Haley's conscience argue with him, at which point





LEFT: Stella Meredith (Gail Russell) goes into her trance, summoning *THE UNINVITED* (1944) spirit of her mother—or is it?—while Dr. Scott (Alan Napier), Rick Fitzgerald (Ray Milland), and Pamela Fitzgerald (Ruth Hussey) watch in fearful anticipation. **RIGHT:** Scott joins the Fitzgeralds as they seek to solve the mystery of their haunted house by visiting the enigmatic Miss Holloway (Cornelia Otis Skinner).

or very strong by the time the movie is over) in a series of funny encounters, culminating in what can only be called a red-herring payoff. *ONE BODY TOO MANY* is by no means a great movie, nor for that matter great Lugosiana, but it's a very friendly footnote to the Paramount horrors of the forties.

Far more satisfying things were in store in 1945 with Lewis Allen's *THE UNSEEN*, a film often thought of as being a followup to *THE UNINVITED*, which, apart from Allen's attachment to the project, Gail Russell in the cast, and the suggestive connection of the titles, it most certainly is not. *THE UNSEEN* isn't even a ghost story, nor is it remotely supernatural. What it is, however, is one of the most unsettling thrillers ever made—the prototype for scads of “alone in the house” movies and still the best, thanks to Allen's skilled direction, another great cast, an effective Ernest Toch score, and a taut script with clever dialogue by Hagar Wilde and Raymond Chandler. Based on a 1942 novel, *Her Heart in Her Throat*, by Ethel Lina White, the script's narrative opening is immediately Chanderlesque. As we watch the events transpiring in the sinister old neighborhood of Crescent Drive, a voice gravely tells us, “Many years ago when the Commodore built it, it had been

one of the show places of New Bristol—11 Crescent Drive. That's how the house was still listed in the city directory, but it was a dead address. It had been barred, locked, and shuttered for over 12 years. Thousands of days had dawned without a ray of sunshine striking through its windows. It stood among the neighboring houses—dark and blind and almost forgotten. Through a certain window in the house next door, the Crescent seemed deserted—yet not quite deserted. An old woman was crossing the street, bundled against the rain. In front of the empty house, suddenly she paused, surprised, and stared at something she saw—a light in a place where no light should have been. It moved behind the boarded windows. It reached the wall. It should have stopped there, but it didn't. It went on through into the house next door and then she saw why. Below her, dimly through the rain-stained window, a man appeared. She saw him stoop and lift something heavy and put it in place. He must have heard her, for suddenly he turned. When the light hit her face, she stumbled and dropped something—a small gold watch. It was probably the only thing of value she had to her name. Frightened as she was, she stayed to look for it . . . just a little too long. Above her, a door opened—the door of No. 11 Crescent Drive.”

LEFT: Commander Beech (Donald Crisp) knows the truth behind *THE UNINVITED*, and seeks to protect his granddaughter, Stella, and his daughter Mary's memory. (The ghost of Mary is played by Val Lewton regular Elizabeth Russell.) **RIGHT:** Rick and Pam save Stella from throwing herself off a cliff and carry her indoors.



Whether or not Chandler is actually responsible for this opening (certain aspects of it—e.g., “probably the only thing of value she had to her name”—certainly sound like Chandler at his most bitter), it is in his tone and does much to set the mood of the film and lead to the dynamic opening, in which the old lady is pursued through the rain by an unknown assailant and has her neck broken in Salem Alley. It’s a great scene setting and a singularly strong opening, and the film manages to live up to it.

Into this mysterious neighborhood comes Elizabeth Howard (Gail Russell), a young, very inexperienced woman, who has fudged her way into the job of governess for David Fielding’s (Joel McCrea) ghastly children, Ellen (Nona Griffith) and Barney (Richard Lyon). Fielding is not at first impressed with her or fooled. “You’re not 25 or anything like 25, are you?” he asks. Nonetheless, he badly needs a governess and opts to give her a chance, which is more than his son (“You’re my enemy. I hate you”) is prepared to do. It quickly turns out that the son is fixated on his former governess, Maxine (Phyllis Brooks), and that he still receives mysterious phone calls from her—calls with even more mysterious instructions that he dutifully carries out. More disconcerting in a way is Ellen’s scrapbook, filled with Disney characters and one notable addition—the newspaper story of the woman killed in Salem Alley, complete with a photograph of the old girl lying there dead. “That’s Alberta,” Ellen blandly volunteers. “Alberta?” asks Elizabeth. “That’s her there. She’s dead. The man from the empty house isn’t in the picture,” Ellen continues with disturbing nonchalance, explaining that the man from the empty house only comes out at night. “He comes into our house, too. Barney’s seen him, and he hasn’t got a face.” This already disconcerting information (however much might be a child’s fancy) is only compounded when Elizabeth finds nothing less than the late Alberta’s watch, hidden under the liner paper in her dresser drawer.

Strange events continue to permit themselves the luxury of occurring with the arrival of Marian Tygarth (Isobel Elsom), the widow of the Commodore who built No. 11. Marian at first doesn’t identify herself, but merely claims to be in need of a telephone to call a taxi. Only when Elizabeth finds her in another room, looking into the garden next door, does she reveal her identity, and Elizabeth at first assumes she must be the Commodore’s daughter. “But I thought he was . . .” notes Elizabeth. “An old man? He was—a mean old man. He was the meanest man I ever knew. When he died I tried to feel sorry, but . . .” It gets no better when Elizabeth takes the children for a walk and is talked into going to the movies (where—what a surprise!—a Paramount Picture, DeMille’s *NORTH WEST MOUNTED POLICE*, is playing). There, Barney disappears, only to be found making one of his mysterious phone calls. The strange child then leads them home by a very indirect route—Salem Alley—where they encounter the shadow of a man identical to that which appeared just before Alberta was murdered. This sends them all running home, much to the consternation of Fielding, who is having more than second thoughts about Elizabeth, while at the same time becoming drawn to her. For her part—thanks to the information she acquires through the friendly Dr. Charles Evans (Herbert Marshall)—Elizabeth is quickly falling in love with her employer. (This is very

adroitly handled in the script, with Elizabeth, during a moment of tension, calling him David instead of Mr. Fielding. It is the turning point in their relationship.)

Mysterious events continue to pile up—Barney with too much money; someone anonymously informing the police that Fielding is in possession of the dead woman’s watch; strange noises from the cellar; a coal sack that falls over and somehow seems to have later righted itself; the front door being left open (by Barney, as it turns out); the dismissed Maxine sneaking into the house as a maid, only to learn too much and end up with her neck broken shortly after she leaves the house; and the growing conviction of the police that the frequently moody Fielding (whose wife’s death also involved a broken neck) is responsible. All the elements come together in an extended and chilling ending. With the police too interested in him, Fielding disappears. Marian Tygarth opts to stay with Elizabeth, while Barney, unknown to anyone, decides to return his “wages” to the faceless man in the empty house. Strangely, Mrs. Tygarth prompts Elizabeth to play “Beautiful Dreamer,” a tune she earlier professed to hate, on the piano. “That’s lovely, my dear—even though it does bring back that last night. My husband and I had been quarreling all day. It was horrible. And all day the sound of hammering had gone on.” “Hammering?” asks Elizabeth, pausing. “Oh, please go on playing. They were boarding up the windows. We were leaving early in the morning. The Commodore had sent the servants away—it’s almost as though he’d planned it himself. The next morning I locked up the house and said that my husband had gone on ahead,” continues Mrs. Tygarth. Puzzled, Elizabeth asks if Mrs. Tygarth hadn’t previously said that the Commodore died abroad. “How could he? He never went abroad. He never went away at all. He died in that house—and the man who killed him is in there now!” This prompts Elizabeth to stop playing. “Don’t stop—even for a moment! I told him I’d keep you playing. If that piano stops, he’ll start back here. He’ll kill us—the way he killed the others. A murderer is never sure. He had to go back just once more and tonight was his last chance. He made me help him. He thinks I wouldn’t dare give him away. He thinks I’m afraid. He’ll find out how afraid I am. Keep right on playing. I’m going to call the police. It’s our only chance—the only way to keep him in there

till they come.” Mrs. Tygarth sets off—not to call the police, it turns out, but to beard the murderer at the scene of his crime.

Meanwhile, Ellen tells Elizabeth that Barney has gone to the empty house. Leaving the child playing the one piano piece she knows, Elizabeth herself heads to the old house. In typical mystery-story fashion, Mrs. Tygarth finds her quarry and, rather than plug him straight away, insists on indulging in the sort of verbosity for which persons in her situation are so rightly famous. “Blood isn’t so easy to get rid of, is it, even after 12 years? But you’ve done it, haven’t you? It’s all gone—every trace of it, and when they open these windows tomorrow, nobody will ever dream that an old man was murdered in this room. It was worth coming back for, wasn’t it? One last time—to be sure, to feel quite safe. You’d feel even safer if you killed me—the way you killed that old woman when she saw you come out of here, and that girl because she knew too much. I’d be next, I suppose. Well, it isn’t going to be like that. They’re going to



find you here with this gun beside you and that will tell them all they need to know!"

Naturally, this gives the murderer ample opportunity to blind Mrs. Tygarth with a flashlight and thwart her plans with a few shots! The encounter scares Barney and Elizabeth into making a mad dash back to their house, where the solution to the mystery is finally revealed in its entirety. The entire sequence is wonderfully gauged and deliciously melodramatic, and the scenes in the empty house are positively frightening. If the climax could be bettered, it's hard to imagine how.

The only reservations possible about *THE UNSEEN*—apart from a too small range of suspects—lies in certain areas of logic. Most questionable is why the killer went to so much trouble to clean up the evidence of his earlier misdeed rather than merely dispose of the carpet or any of the items that might have held traces of the crime. More, one cannot but wonder just why it has taken him these seemingly endless rounds of "one more visits" to the scene? This, however, is carping about an otherwise excellent film, one of the most accomplished of all the Paramount horrors.

A curious Paramount footnote appeared in 1947 in the form of the Pine-Thomas production, *FEAR IN THE NIGHT*. Maxwell Shane, who had been partly responsible for the script of *ONE BODY TOO MANY*, was handed this version of Cornell Woolrich's 1941 novelette "And So to Death" (also known as "Nightmare") for his debut as both writer and director. Shane was constrained by a budget that must have been an all-time low even for Pine-Thomas. (Normal everyday scenes are often played out in front of obvious rear screens and a sudden rainstorm is perhaps the least convincing optical effect in the history of film!) Nevertheless, *FEAR IN THE NIGHT*, a dark tale of murder committed by the victim of a master hypnotist, is a decent little excursion into *noir*, with slightly horrific overtones. Its overall air of creepiness, especially concerning an octagonal mirrored room, and a plethora of creative—if obvious—opticals in the early scenes, frankly call to mind much of the genuine sense of a nightmare. (Presumably, the film bypassed Woolrich's alternate title because Universal had used *NIGHTMARE* for a 1942 spy mystery with Brian

Donlevy and Diana Barrymore.) Not a great movie by any means (though

in 1988's *First You Dream, Then You Die*, Woolrich biographer Francis M. Nevins called it "the finest by far of the B pictures based on a Woolrich short story or novelette"), *FEAR IN THE NIGHT* is only marginally a horror film. However, it's a very interesting example of a filmmaker making something out of almost nothing in the way of production values. A less-than-name cast do right by the material, especially Paul Kelly in one of his best performances. Today, the film is probably most famous as the debut work of another Kelley: DeForest, who looks barely out of high school but bravely tackles the lead.

Three years separate *THE UNSEEN* from the studio's next genuine excursion into the genre, but *NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES* (1948) is very nearly worth the wait. Much like *THE UNSEEN*, *NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES* might almost be viewed as a horror *noir*, though with a stronger dose of the supernatural—or at least the paranormal. Based on the 1945 novel of the same name by Cornell Woolrich, the screenplay by playwright Barre Lyndon and mystery specialist Jonathan Latimer was moodily directed by John Farrow (who also worked with Latimer that same year on *THE BIG CLOCK*) and nearly flawlessly acted by another top-flight Paramount cast. It is a film that requires a powerhouse performance at its center, and that is exactly what it gets from Edward G. Robinson as the tragically psychic John Triton, a vaudeville mind-reader whose act turns out to be considerably more genuine than he imagined. Eddie G. is ably assisted by Gail Russell as the lady in distress. John Lund might be a bit stiff as the hero, but it's that kind of role—he has to be skeptical to a degree that defies all logic in order for the plot to work. In an unusual move, the generally comedic William Demarest plays police detective Lieutenant Shawn with a minimum of shtick and the appearance of some degree of intelligence. The rest of the cast are uniformly fine, but it really is Robinson's show—and director Farrow's.

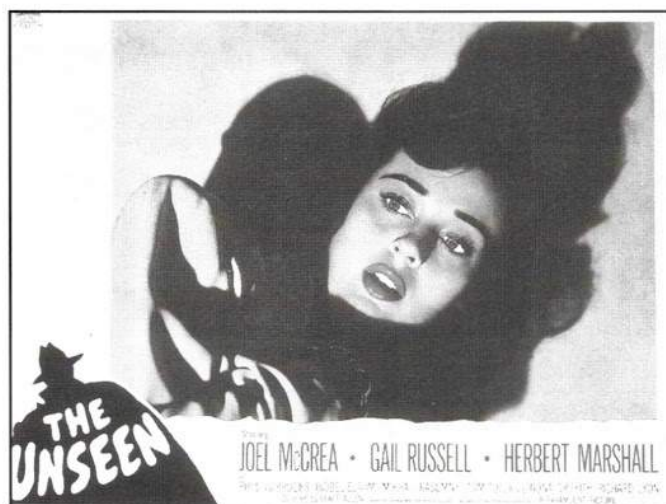
The stylishness with which Farrow approaches the material is apparent from the onset, with an exciting and seemingly inexplicable sequence in which Elliott Carson (Lund) prevents Jean Courtland (Russell) from throwing herself off a crosswalk into the path of an oncoming train. It is only after her rescue and their journey to a Chinese restaurant to meet John Triton that the events start to make sense—to the viewer, if not to the skeptical Carson, who



PAGE 66: Joel McCrea, Gail Russell, and Herbert Marshall keep a sharp lookout for *THE UNSEEN* (1945). RIGHT TOP: Gail Russell followed her successful debut in *THE UNINVITED* with *THE UNSEEN*—a followup, not a sequel, to the first film. RIGHT MIDDLE: Eve Brandon (Helen Walker) reacts in despair as Julian Karell (Nils Asther) rapidly ages in *THE MAN IN HALF MOON STREET* (1944), later remade by Hammer Films as *THE MAN WHO COULD CHEAT DEATH* (1959). RIGHT BOTTOM: During a performance with partners Whitney Courtland (Jerome Cowan) and Jenny (Virginia Bruce), John Triton (Edward G. Robinson) finds his phony mentalist routine becoming frightening real. *NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES* (1948) also starred John Lund and the very busy Gail Russell.

might have cause for a little more credulity since it was Triton who directed him to the rail yard. Triton relates his history and how 20 years ago he began having visions that invariably came true. At first he uneasily used his visions for good (and profit), but he became increasingly obsessed over the possibility that he was actually making the events happen. Matters reached a crisis when he foresaw that, if he married his fiancée, Jenny (Virginia Bruce), she would die in childbirth. Hoping to spare her this fate, he disappeared, only to learn that she married his now wealthy (thanks to a stock-tip premonition) partner, Whitney Courtland (Jerome Cowan), and suffered exactly the same fate she would have with Triton. After having cut himself off from humanity for years, Triton moved near Whitney and his grown daughter, Jean. Daring to get close enough for a good look on the night of Jean's coming-out party, he had a quick premonition of airplane wreckage, but it was only much later when he heard that Whitney was about to attempt to break a transcontinental speed record that he saw the extent of the tragedy, with his old friend dying in a plane crash. He tried to prevent this, but his only chance came just minutes too late and his prophecy was fulfilled, causing Jean and Carson to pay their first visit to him. It was then that Triton had his most disturbing vision—one that Jean guessed and called on him again to confirm. She reminded him that he started to warn her about a light-fingered maid waltzing off with her sapphire brooch. "You said that it wouldn't make any difference. You meant I was going to die, didn't you?" Triton couldn't bring himself to answer, which was an answer in itself. "That's what I thought. How soon is it going to be? How soon and where?" "Within a few days—toward the end of the week—at night, under the stars." Not surprisingly, Jean didn't take this well at all and fainted dead away.

The rest of the film details Triton's efforts to prevent his prophecy coming to pass, and the efforts of the police to thwart what they presume to be a scam, possibly involving murder, on his part. Despite everything the law attempts, one by one, Triton's predictions—no matter how outrageous—come true, even after the police lock him up and have him examined by specialists in paranormal psychology. "This gift which I never asked for and I don't understand has brought me only unhappiness," he tells them. "Over a period of 20 years, at various times I've foreseen tragic occurrences and no matter what I did I couldn't prevent their coming true. I thought perhaps you could tell me something about it. Why were these gifts given to me? And why was this other power withheld—the power to turn evil into good?" They haven't an answer. However, neither are they convinced of his powers until he correctly predicts the suicide of another prisoner, at which point the police relent and take him to Jean in an attempt to prevent the vision of her death from becoming reality. It's powerful material all the way around—and even more powerfully presented. Again, as with Paramount's other A picture horrors, much of the film's success is firmly grounded in the absolute conviction of the presentation.





LEFT: "But we don't wanna write FAUST!" whined Nanette Fabray in *THE BANDWAGON*, but Jonathan Latimer did just that in *ALIAS NICK BEAL* (1949), with Thomas Mitchell as the victim, Ray Milland as the devil, and Audrey Totter as the temptress. RIGHT: The butler did it? That usually isn't the case when the manservant in question is played by red-herring Bela Lugosi, as he is in *ONE BODY TOO MANY* (1944)

The problem with *NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES* is the scripting contrivance of the very human (and very base) agency at work to bring about Jean's death, which very nearly turns the film into a half-assed mystery with an unsurprising surprise killer. There isn't enough buildup for the mystery element (or at least of that mystery element) to work. An abortive attempt by the killer to smother Jean with a pillow, and a shot of his hand slipping into frame to move a clock ahead so the police will think the danger hour of 11 has past, seem almost like intrusions into the otherworldly proceedings. Worse still is the killer's motive. All these devices are far too mundane for the otherwise ethereal nature of the story.

Farrow returned at the decade's end for the studio's last foray into the genre: *ALIAS NICK BEAL* (1949), a film that can best be called an interesting misfire. Based on its credentials, the film ought to be better than it is—reteaming Farrow with Jonathan Latimer and bringing in Ray Milland—but this modern dress reworking of the Faust story never quite comes off. There are numerous good things about it—Milland's performance as "Nick Beal" and Thomas Mitchell's as his victim, not to mention Audrey Totter

as Beal's tool of temptation, Franz Waxman's effective score (the tuba motif for Beal, often mixing with and seeming to draw off the foghorns near Beal's sleazy waterfront headquarters, is a singularly creepy creation), atmospheric and extremely low-key photography—but the film never quite jells. Latimer's screenplay deftly infuses Beal with a sly humor that plays off Milland's charm, making the character both amusing and more dangerous. (When he passes a Salvation Army penitent talking about having wrestled the devil to the mat, Beal muses, "I wonder if he knows it's best two falls out of three?") Some scenes are standouts. Mitchell's first encounter with Milland on the fog-shrouded waterfront is marvelous, as are all the film's waterfront scenes, especially one in which the whistling Milland walks off into the dark with an expendable pawn in his game, capped by the man's unexpected scream. There is also a grimly amusing—almost blasphemously so—bit in which Reverend Garfield (George Macready) tries to get Beal to read a passage from the Bible at a boys' club. (Garfield should have dialed "O" for O'Malley.)

Continued on page 76

LEFT: A haunted John Triton (Edward G. Robinson) tries to convince Elliott Carson (John Lund) and Jean Courtland (Gail Russell) that he can see the future, and what he sees is death under a *NIGHT WITH A THOUSAND EYES* (1948). RIGHT: On the side of goodness and light earlier in the decade with *THE UNINVITED* (1944), Ray Milland was the very devil himself in *ALIAS NICK BEAL*.





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Book Ends

The Scarlet Street Review of Books

HITCHCOCK POSTER ART

Tony Nourman and Mark H. Wolff
The Overlook Press
126 pages—\$35

The Master of Suspense was also a Master of Promotion, as these vintage posters, lobby cards, press books, and photos from his films conclusively demonstrate.

The material is international in scope, featuring art not only from the United States and Great Britain, but France, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Poland, and several other countries, all reproduced stunningly in full color. The majority comes from the collection of Mark H. Wolff, the result of 22 years devoted to gathering Hitchcockiana. Wolff's cache is augmented by Tony Nourman, owner of the Reel Poster Gallery in London, for as complete a picture as possible.

Among the gems Wolff and Nourman have mined from Sir Alfred's 50-plus years of filmmaking are the famous February 1, 1963 *Life* cover of Hitch with three crows (publicizing 1963's *THE BIRDS*, naturally), a splendid art deco one-sheet for *THE LADY VANISHES* (1938), a 24-sheet for *SPELLBOUND* (1945) in which Gregory Peck's hand—and the open razor he clasps—dominates, an insert for *NOTORIOUS* (1946) with a key motif that's duplicated 12 years later for a French rerelease poster advertising *DIAL M FOR MURDER* (1954), a moody lobby card for *ROPE* (1948) on which only James Stewart's name is featured, an in-

sert for *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN* (1951) featuring a man dangling from the locomotive in question ("It's off the beaten track," claims the blurb, just as the advertising is off the mark), and a deliciously cheesy Italian poster for *MARNIE* (1964) with "rape art" that, but for the faces of Sean Connery and Tippi Hedren, might have come straight off the cover of a dime novel.

Dozens of lobby cards are displayed in the book's closing section—and then, for a final treat, we're presented with the movie tie-in covers of hardcovers and paperbacks ranging from Marie Belloc Lowndes' *The Lodger* (1913) to Robert Bloch's *Psycho* (1959).

For lovers of movie art in general and Alfred Hitchcock in particular, this book is no MacGuffin—it's the real thing, and well worth the price.

—Richard Valley

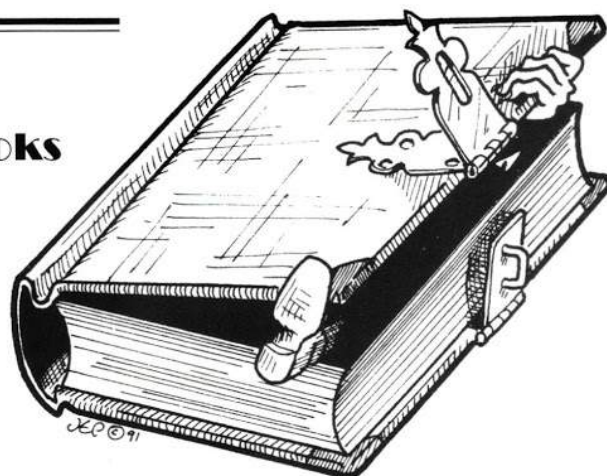
ORIGINAL STORY BY

Arthur Laurents

Alfred A. Knopf

436 pages—\$30

Of perhaps marginal interest to followers of Alfred Hitchcock (though it shouldn't be) is this intriguing autobiography by Arthur Laurents, who wrote the screenplay for the director's great experiment in



"single-take movies," *ROPE* (1948). Laurents was taken into the Hitchcock clan (Alfred, wife and partner Alma, and daughter Patricia) as a friend, only to be banished when he refused to write the screenplay for *UNDER CAPRICORN* (1949), a project he thought wrong for the Master of Suspense. (He was right.) Twice after that Hitchcock approached Laurents (for 1966's *TORN CURTAIN* and 1969's *TOPAZ*), and twice again, for the best reasons, Laurents turned him down—something the director found impossible to forgive.

Laurents writes of Hitchcock's fascination with all forms of what he considered "kinky sex," and the author was literally in a position to know: before and for some time after the making of *ROPE*, his roommate and lover was one of the film's stars, Farley Granger. (The relationship hit a few potholes when Granger journeyed to New York to make 1949's *SIDE STREET*, and spent his off-camera hours hitting high notes with future Laurents collaborator Leonard Bernstein.) Laurents reveals that the original dream cast for *ROPE* was Granger, Montgomery Clift as his domineering boyfriend and fellow killer, and Cary Grant as the gay professor who catches them at murder. Gay professor? That's right: the character ultimately played by James Stewart (and thus rendered sexless, according to Laurents) was supposed to be gay, and quite probably an ex-lover of the character slated for Clift.

All this, of course, is just a small part of the full Laurents puzzle, and Laurents does his damndest to fill in all the other pieces with a refreshing frankness and often acid wit. You'll read about his plays (1953's *THE TIME OF THE CUCKOO* and its disastrous musical incarnation, 1965's *DO I HEAR A WALTZ?*), musicals (the books for 1959's *GYPSY*, 1957's *WEST SIDE STORY*—both enduring classics of the theater—and 1991's megaflop, *NICK AND NORA*, based on Dashiell Hammett's *The Thin Man*, which the author understandably tends to ignore), his screenplays (uncredited for 1948's *THE SNAKE PIT*, and 1973's *THE WAY WE WERE*), and his seemingly hundreds of lovers, male (mostly) and female. For those interested in one or all of these achievements, Arthur Laurents life and

Arthur Laurents poses with his movie-star boyfriend, Farley Granger, and screenwriter Millard Kaufman. Laurents wrote *ROPE* (1948), Granger starred.



times are as fascinating as Hitchcock thought they were . . .

—Richard Valley

THE AMAZING COLOSSAL BOOK OF HORROR TRIVIA

Jonathan Malcolm Lampley, Ken Beck, and Jim Clark

Cumberland House
256 pages—\$12.95

I usually approach film trivia books with trepidation. First off, it's a largely "fun" branch of film history, so it's best not to take it too seriously. Second, trivia books invariably run the risk of being either material the savvy genre fan knows all too well or material so obscure that no one either knows or cares. The trick is to walk a fine line between the easy and the impossibly hard, so I was delighted to find that Messrs. Lampley, Beck, and Clark had navigated this precarious task with nary a slip—especially, since *The Amazing Colossal Book of Horror Trivia* is such a handsomely produced volume, complete with a nice Basil Gogol cover and a foreword by no less a personage than the Elder Statesman of Horror, Forrest J Ackerman.

The authors have broken the book down into 17 categories—starting with "Dracula and Other Vampires" and culminating in "The Cauldron of Heebie Jeebies." The questions are usually categorized by individual film and range from the reasonably easy "Who goes to Castle Dracula to conduct business with the count (Bela Lugosi)?" to the hardcore genre enthusiast level of "What Tchaikovsky music is heard during the

opening credits of the film?" The book also works as a nifty guide for the novice by providing thumbnail biographies of the principal genre figures: Karloff, Lugosi, Whale, Browning, the Chaney, etc. The bios aren't likely to offer much new to the seasoned fan, but they're fun, well-done, and a nice touch. The authors also list a series of Top Five films in each section, which is apt to be the only possibly controversial aspect of the book. This, however, adds a measure of personalization to the work. The book makes a good starting point for the new horror enthusiast, as well as providing some solid entertainment for the veteran.

—Ken Hanke

CLAUDE RAINS: A COMPREHENSIVE ILLUSTRATED REFERENCE

John T. Soister with JoAnna Wioskowski

McFarland and Co. 1999

Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640

266 pages—\$45

When I first saw this book, my initial reaction was mixed. A book on Claude Rains—a "definitive" book—was certainly overdue. From a horror fan's standpoint, it almost seemed a missing essential—Jack Griffin in *THE INVISIBLE MAN* (1933), John Jasper in *THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD* (1935), Claudin in *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* (1943). These performances are so central to our collective memories that the horror fan has a tendency to want to embrace the actor as a card-carrying iconic figure of the genre—an attitude that is certainly aided by his performances in *THE MAN WHO RECLAIMED HIS HEAD* (1934),

THE WOLF MAN (1941), and *THE LOST WORLD* (1960). If one's taste for the cinema of the fantastic can be stretched to include, in a kind of nor' by nor'west manner, films such as *NOTORIOUS* (1946), then the net broadens. Still, the central fact remains that much of Rains' work is totally outside the genre in a way that doesn't enter the picture with such obvious, choices as Karloff, Lugosi, or Chaney the Younger. In fact, much of Rains' best work is in such films as *CASABLANCA* (1942), *NOW VOYAGER* (1942), and, perhaps best of all, *DECEPTION* (1946). This could pose a problem for genre writers unfamiliarity with films outside their area of expertise, but this is not the case with John T. Soister and JoAnna Wioskowski, who are not only knowledgeable, but can actually write! In fact, they have produced here not only the book on Claude Rains, but a model of what a book on an actor should entail.

Far too many studies focusing on performers analyze the films of the performer and not the performance itself. The results are often interesting, but rarely tell the reader very much about the actor. With few exceptions—those where the performer is involved in another creative capacity or is the film's *raison d'être*—it's possible to assess a film without paying more than scant attention to the actor. This can happen even when supposedly writing about an actor. Sometimes a writer has a tendency to credit the actor with accomplishments that are probably more attributable to the director or writer. Of all the elements that make up a film, performance is hardest to write

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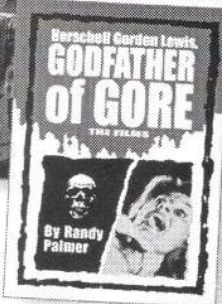
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about. Soister and Wiokowski, however, write persuasively, convincingly, and, yes, lovingly about Rains' performances, while not getting lost in the films themselves. In each case, they present the film, but keep the focus on Rains' performance, placing it and what Rains brings to it within the timeline of his overall career. To the uninitiated this probably sounds simple, but seeing it done and done well—as it is in this book—makes it clear that it is really a major accomplishment. This McFarland opus is a keeper and is destined to become a classic of the form.

—Paul Campeau

SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN

Continued from page 28

tured Baum's world and featured a Dorothy that was finally the correct age!

RETURN TO OZ picks up six months after the events in WIZARD OF OZ and incorporates characters and events from the next two books, *The Land of Oz* (1904) and *Ozma of Oz* (1907). Dorothy (Fairuza Balk) is taken to a sinister doctor (Nicol Williamson) in hopes that he can cure her of sleepless nights and notions of a place that doesn't exist. A handy electrical storm transports Dorothy and her hen Billina back to Oz, where they discover The Emerald City in ruins and its citizens turned to stone. Dorothy soon has a rag-tag army, consisting of Tic Tok (the Royal Army of Oz), Jack Pumpkinhead, and the Gump. She heads off to fight the head-stealing Princess Mombi (Jean Marsh) and the powerful Nome King (Nicol Williamson) and restore the land of Oz.

Anchor Bay Entertainment's DVD offers a passable print in either full-frame or letterbox (1.85) editions featuring a seven-second introduction by Fairuza Balk. The only supplement is a nice 11-minute 11-second interview with Balk, which is not on the main menu, but sits by itself in the extras menu. The keeppcase includes a postcard of Dorothy with her companions from both WIZARD and RETURN in the Emerald City throne room. While the disc lacks supplements, the freeze frame feature itself offers a wonderful extra. Disney bought the rights to all the Oz books (sans *Wizard*, of course), planning to make a series of Oz films. To save money, they built several characters for future films for use in the finale. Using freeze frame, you can see such would-have-been major characters as PolyChrome (from 1909's *The Road To Oz*) and the Patchwork Girl (from 1913's *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*).

—Jeff Allen

KASEY ROGERS

Continued from page 41

Monash, the producer, said, "No, we're shooting. We need you here." So she went in the middle of the day and cut off all her long hair! That was her trademark, her hair halfway down her back—and she just cut it all off. The hairdresser was about to have a heart attack! She got on the phone and Paul Monash came

down and took one look and said, "Keep shooting." And he went back and wrote a scene where she cut off all her hair! (Laughs) She never let her hair grow that long again. She always had that short, boyish haircut...

SS: Henry Beckman played your husband on PEYTON PLACE.

KR: Henry was wonderful. He was also in a BEWITCHED episode. I didn't even know, because we didn't work together, but there's this clique that knows everything about BEWITCHED—who was on, when they changed the key for the music in the third season; it's scary!—and they told me. But PEYTON PLACE was wonderful, and then to switch over to BEWITCHED, to put on a black wig and to become innocent, "not knowing what's going on" Louise Tate—well, for three or four years after I started BEWITCHED, people would come up and say, "Oh, you were on PEYTON PLACE!" Not on BEWITCHED, mind you, which was in the top 10, but PEYTON PLACE. Finally I got to the point I'd say, "Do you ever watch BEWITCHED?" They'd say, "Yes." "Well, you know the boss's wife? Louise Tate?" "Yes." "Well, that's me." "No!" (Laughs)

SS: Did your two series overlap at all?

KR: I left PEYTON PLACE and began almost immediately on BEWITCHED. Which was, again, so lucky!

SS: Had you seen any of Irene Vernon's performances in the role?

KR: Oh, yes! BEWITCHED was one of my favorite shows! For two years, I got to watch the black-and-white BEWITCHED episodes and just loved the show. I had seen Irene, of course, but I certainly was not influenced by her performance. We're two very different people. What any producer hires you for is to see what you bring to a particular role. So I just did what I did, and that seemed to work.

SS: Do you have a favorite episode?

KR: Everybody asks me that! It's hard to choose, but I like the one about the painting. There's a spell put on Darrin and he supposedly paints this gorgeous picture of Samantha—The Mona Sammy! Louise wants her portrait painted, and Sam has to zap Darrin so he can paint this portrait of Louise. In the middle of it, Endora changes it so that the painting comes out with the eyes crossed and the nose bulging and the teeth blacked out; it's the ugliest thing! The reason I really remember it is because I still have both paintings. When the show was over, I thought, "They're never gonna use these again," so I asked Bill Asher if I could have them. So I have them!

SS: Not on the wall, hopefully!

KR: Well, we hang the ugly one up for Halloween every year—but I'll tell you what I always threaten to do. I always threaten to hang the nice one and have a cocktail party and then, in the middle of the party, switch pictures!

SS: You'd put AA out of business! Let's talk about your costars on BEWITCHED.

KR: Well, I have a blanket statement, that you could not work with a more professional, wonderful, talented group of

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PARAMOUNT HORRORS

Continued from page 70

And speaking of Father O'Malley, or rather the star who played him, an altogether more whimsical tone is the keynote to David Miller's *TOP O' THE MORNING* (1949), the third teaming of Bing Crosby and Barry Fitzgerald and probably the least known. (Fitzgerald's brother, Arthur Shields, seems to be padding the payroll as the film's "Technical Advisor.") Though the splendidly Irish-set film is very much a mystery—a musical one at that, involving the theft of the Blarney Stone, no less!—and a surprisingly effective and well-structured one, it isn't in the least horrific. It is, however, full of legends, omens, and a genial air of the fantastic. *TOP O' THE MORNING*'s Biddy O'Devlin (Eileen Crowe), with her ability to foretell the future, yet not necessarily understand all the symbolism of her visions, is a kind of benignly comic version of Edward G. Robinson's John Triton. (Discussing placing a curse on Bing, she opines, "It does little good to put a curse on Americans. They don't seem to know the difference.") There is also a very finely honed atmosphere to the film's last reel, with its eerie woodland denouement, the unexpectedly grim aspect of putting a cute kid (Jimmy Hunt) in mortal peril, and the weird wordless vocal the boy is given to warble in connection with one of Biddy's omens. The effect is quite unusual, but the film is really Bing and Barry's show, with Barry as a crusty policeman and Der Bingle in the atypical role of an insurance investigator (chosen for the case due to his Irish background—"Joe Mulqueen, genuine Newark built-in brogue Irish!") and amateur avant-gardist/primitive painter. ("Tell me, did you pay money to learn this?" asks Fitzgerald, apprising one of his works.) Though quite different in tone from such grim fare as *THE MAD DOCTOR* and *THE MONSTER AND THE GIRL*—apart from its finale—there's something altogether fitting that Paramount should close out its second decade of horror and the fantastic with a Crosby film, neatly rounding out a cycle that commenced with the Bob Hope horror-comedies *THE CAT AND THE CANARY* (1939) and *THE GHOST BREAKERS* (1940).

Actually, it's refreshing to see Paramount close out the decade with two worthy efforts to do something different—refreshing and apt, since Paramount was always the studio most likely to attempt the different. Ironically, late in *ALIAS NICK BEAL* Reverend Garfield has a line that rather neatly sums up the immediate fate of the horror film at the close of the 20th century's first half—"It's the wrong century for superstition, for werewolves, vampires, and devils,



Bob Hope and Paulette Goddard meet up with a zombie in *THE GHOST BREAKERS* (1940), the first movie in Paramount's forties cycle of horror films.

for evil enchantments and black magic." The wrong century perhaps not, but it was definitely the wrong time. With the end of the forties, Paramount put an end to any serious involvement in the genre, and with the George Pal productions *WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE* (1951), and *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS* (1953), turned their eyes heavenward—but they left behind two decades of horror films second only to those of Universal, a studio they actually may have surpassed in terms of diversity. And that's a legacy worth remembering . . .



NOT HIS LAST BOW

Continued from page 54

and over again to get all the little nuances of instrumentation and write out a full orchestral score. That's really the longest process, orchestrating the stuff. Sometimes it can take a few months to do a couple of albums.

"I chose the Val Lewton films to introduce Roy Webb. This is the first serious rerecording of Roy Webb and all the scores are very different; the music is much more subtle and quite different from the Universal horror films. There's more chamber music, more like Friedhofer's *THE LODGER*. I knew it didn't have the storms and the passion that Salter and Skinner did. That's not saying the music is any less; it's just different. So I picked five of the Val Lewton films to record."

Morgan is undecided over whether Webb's music will appeal to a large audience. "I don't know. I hope so! You just never know on that stuff. You would think not, because people haven't done it. But that's what people said about Salter and Skinner, because no one had done them, and they were good sellers. By doing the Val Lewtons, we get not only the film-music buffs, but the genre buffs for the horror films. They're very well-respected films. I think

we have a chance of doing fairly well with that—it's very good, very melodic, very moody music."

According to Morgan, Roy Webb was inspired in his early composing years by Max Steiner. "Max Steiner was his mentor at RKO in the early thirties. If you look at *THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII*, you see that Webb certainly was influenced heavily by Steiner, but in the late thirties, early forties he really grabbed onto his own voice. A lot of people consider him nondescript, because the music just melds into the film and it's not knocking your socks off like Steiner or Korngold, but it's so subtle and wonderful, the weaving and the harmonies. I think he's the unsung hero as far as film music, and I think people will enjoy it as music."

On the subject of instrumentation, Morgan had this to say about unusual or hard-to-find pieces needed for these scores. "Well, with the Webb music we had the kind of oddball singing voices that we needed. We needed a novachord and a Hammond organ. We had a real organ there, but did the novachord sound on a synthesizer; we got a nice sound for that. Again, with Webb it was quite bizarre—all the different instrumentations and combinations. We needed saxophones, oboe d'amour, and alto flute. So

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KASEY ROGERS

Continued from page 74

people! Every costar, every guest star was wonderful! Elizabeth was such a pro. In the early days when she and Bill Asher were newly married, she'd work so hard to please him. At the end of a scene, he wouldn't say cut and she'd just continue reacting to the dialogue for God knows how long, and finally, eventually he'd smile and say, "Cut!" And she'd give him this look—but she was such a pro!

SS: Which Darrin did you prefer?

KR: Dick! (Laughs) No, they were both lovely. Dick York was in such pain with his back problems, but I never heard him complain. And talk about a rubber face! He'd do these wonderful takes and reactions; he was a great comic actor. Unfortunately, they had to replace him, because the last season he was in, he was missing too many shows; he was in the hospital and there was nothing they could do about it. So Dick Sargent, who was a very different Darrin, came in. I don't think he had the comedy background, but he learned and became funnier as he went along—though he was a much angrier Darrin. Still, it worked for three years. It's the same as me and Irene Vernon. We were two very different people; she had a totally different personal quality.

SS: There were also two actresses as Gladys Kravitz: Alice Pearce and Sandra Gould.

KR: Oh, there were a number of duplicate actors on the show. Sandra Gould had been my friend before BEWITCHED. We had known each other for so long we couldn't remember where we met. They were all just incredibly talented people.

SS: What about Agnes Moorehead?

KR: Oh, Agnes was wonderful! Agnes was the same off camera as on, practically. People would ask her about acting and being in films and so on, and she would throw her arms in the air and say, "I love the illusion!" (Laughs) That's the

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way she lived her life, I think. She really didn't want to play Endora, but she didn't think it would last, so she took the part. Then it went on and on, so she just did it for the money, I guess. Of course, everyone remembers her for BEWITCHED, not realizing that she had an Oscar nomination for MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS. She was a serious actress, theatrically trained. To pull off Endora, she could utilize her bitchiness and be "above everything," and she was great.

SS: And David White, who played Larry Tate?

KR: We worked together very well, but we never socialized. He lost a son in that Lockerbie plane crash, which just destroyed him. I never saw him after the show, actually, but friends told me what had happened and that he never got over it.

SS: That's such a shame. But let's not forget Paul Lynde...

KR: Oh, brilliant! He was so funny! Now, Paul was gay—he had that campy humor—but I don't know that his fans ever thought about it; they just thought that the characters he did were so funny. He was just adorable!

SS: Dick Sargent came out shortly before his death; he wanted to do it as a gesture to young gay people. Several BEWITCHED episodes touch on the subject of intolerance—intolerance towards witches—and there were a number of gay people on the show. Do you think the episodes about the acceptance of differences held special meaning for them, as a metaphor?

KR: Oh, I'm sure! The cause was near and dear to their hearts, and injustice of any sort should be stopped. BEWITCHED had that lovely Christmas episode—Tabitha and a little black girl want to be sisters, so Tabitha cast a spell where she got big black polka dots on her face and the little black girl had big white polka dots on her face! (Laughs) It was funny, but it made a statement against intolerance.

SS: Pretty progressive for a sixties sitcom!



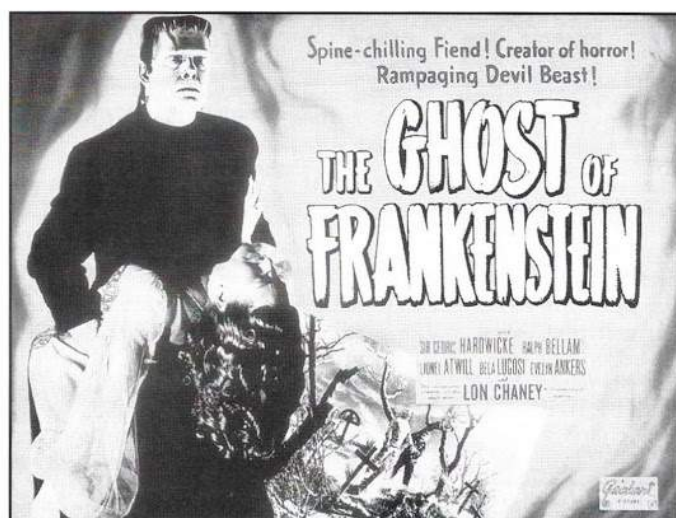
Cowgirl Kasey in an early phase of her long career, which has taken her from Hitchcock to hexes!

KR: The writers, my dear, on that show were just brilliant—again, as on PEYTON PLACE, we had the best in the industry. You have that kind of writing, even if you're a half-assed actress, you can't go wrong! (Laughs)

SS: There's talk about a BEWITCHED revival.

KR: Okay, I'll tell you about that. There's a man here, now—Mark Wood, who comes from Atlanta, Georgia. He was the world's biggest BEWITCHED fan from the time he was just a kid. Mark is young enough to be my youngest child, so he's just a young man who grew up watching us all on BEWITCHED. His dream in life was to do a spinoff. Back in Georgia, he made a little film called BEWITCHED AGAIN, a little half-hour demo. Well, we had a mutual friend—Herbie J. Pollato, who wrote the BEWITCHED book—and Mark got everybody's telephone number from Herbie. He looked over the whole list and decided that I was the least in-

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NOT HIS LAST BOW

Continued from page 76

there were unusual instruments, but nothing really bizarre. The oboe is a little lower than a regular oboe, kind of between an oboe and an English horn, and it's very good with beautiful melodic lines."

Now that most of Universal's horror music from the forties has been recorded, Morgan promises to eventually turn his attention to the studio's thirties output, including a 13-minute suite by Joseph Marcello for *WEREWOLF OF LONDON* (1935), supposedly in production. "So far I don't think there are definite plans for doing it on CD, but it does exist. In fact a friend of mine, Richard Bush, really put together the concept and Marcello did the technical work on it. It's a very good suite and I hope they get it recorded."

Morgan wasn't concerned that it might "take a bite" out of his own Laemmle-era disc. "You could almost do 20 minutes of *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER*, and I certainly would put some of *WEREWOLF OF LONDON* on it; you'd have to have that one."

What about other films with the word "Frankenstein" in the title—for instance, *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* (1948), which so far has been completely neglected? Claims Morgan, "I told Dave Schecter if he really wanted to do that one very badly, and if things go good with them, they can do it. If not, I'll do it. So I think be-



tween one of us, it will be done. I can guarantee someone will do that."

No film-music lover is likely to argue that the tedious work being done by John Morgan to rescue these scores from the past is unimportant. Every note, each passage restored is as crucial to the future as film preservation itself. Even more important to Morgan is the chance to give composers their moment in the sun. "These composers mean a lot to me. They were my life's blood, musically, growing up. They were my introduction to music, to classical music, and everything else, and they've been over the years pissed on. They've been neglected, people don't take them seriously, and to me it's fine music. It works as music away from the films and I feel that, in a small way, I can help pay back for all the wonderful hours of enjoyment I've gotten through listening to the music and it making me the kind of musician I am. I am so in awe of their knowledge and their technique, their genius in working on this—especially people like Salter and Skinner and Webb. You know, very rarely are you going to find record companies that are willing to spend all the money to rerecord people like them. So it's something that I feel very lucky that I'm in a position to do, and it's something that I feel I have to do until the series either stops or people stop buying them. I just want to get as much of this stuff done as I can. Someone's got to do it, and it's a pleasure . . ."



KASEY ROGERS

Continued from page 77

timidating! So he called and we talked for an hour. He set up an acting seminar, because he was studying, and I visited his parents home and did the seminar. I said, "Well, if you ever come to Hollywood, I'll put you up for a couple of weeks." Well, within a year he came to Hollywood and he's never left! Together, we tried to get *BEWITCHED AGAIN* on the air, to do a spinoff with the kids grown up. At the time, Elizabeth was alive and she did not want to do it. She wanted nothing to do with *BEWITCHED* after it ended. I think, after her marriage to Bill broke up, it brought back too many painful memories. Too bad; if we had her, we'd have had the series. Columbia says, "No, we want to do a feature film." They've had that on the agenda for 10 years, they haven't done it yet! So we finally said the heck with it and we went off and wrote our own script, which is not *BEWITCHED* but in the same genre—it's called *SON OF A WITCH!* (Laughs)

SS: You could write a script about your own experiences. Running on logs, leaping over train cars, barroom brawls—were you a tomboy as a child?

KR: Oh, yes, I was a tomboy! I raced motorcycles, too! My youngest son, Mike—he was nine, and he said he wanted a motorcycle. And I said, "You want a what?" I didn't know anything about those things; they were scary! So he got a minibike, and pretty soon he wanted to race. I took him to ride in the Encino Hills, and after awhile I couldn't just sit and watch—so I got a bike, too! They had a "powder puff," a girls' class, but I learned to ride on the regular motorcross tracks with all the teenage boys. I'd rev on the line, dump a clutch, and grab a handful! That means I'd rev the bike, getting the RPMs up, then I'd put it into gear. When you "grab a handful," you twist the accelerator on the right handle. Then you haul ass, trying to get the hole shot in the first corner! (Laughs)

SS: Okay, if you say so! (Laughs) What do you consider the highlight of your acting career?

KR: Oh, *BEWITCHED*, *PEYTON PLACE*, *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN* . . .

SS: All three, eh?

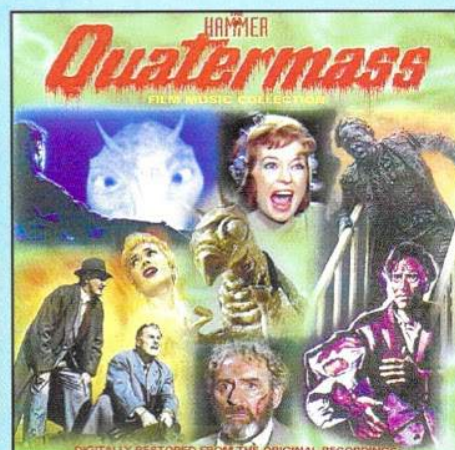
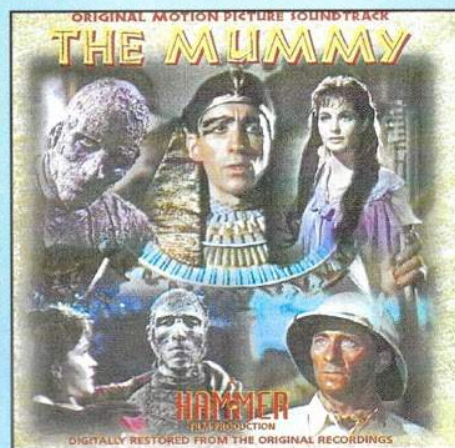
KR: How could you go wrong? Talent is one thing, but let's face it—luck is something, too!

KATHLEEN FREEMAN

Continued from page 59

through to be expert at his craft? Are they just supposed to put it aside and not do it anymore? It doesn't make any sense. The truth is, they're still at the top of their game. If you open a bottle of old wine, it's usually a lot better than new wine. I know that some elderly people hide themselves under a bushel basket or get victimized or whatever—but we, as artists, have the responsibility of saying, "Nope! Not me!" And, obviously, I'm still here—and I'm still doing it!





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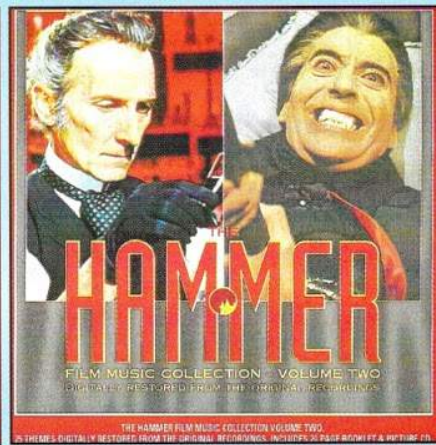
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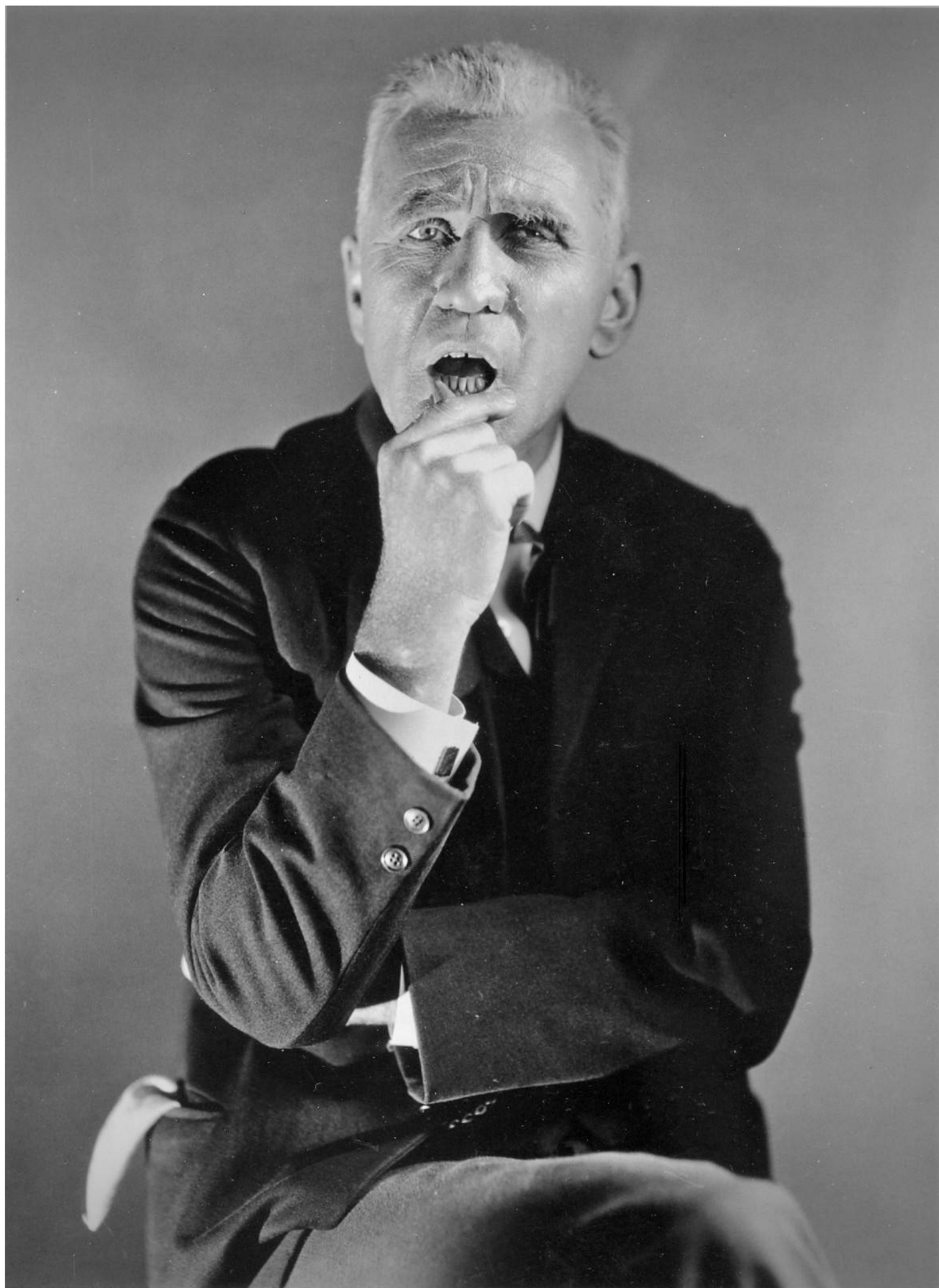
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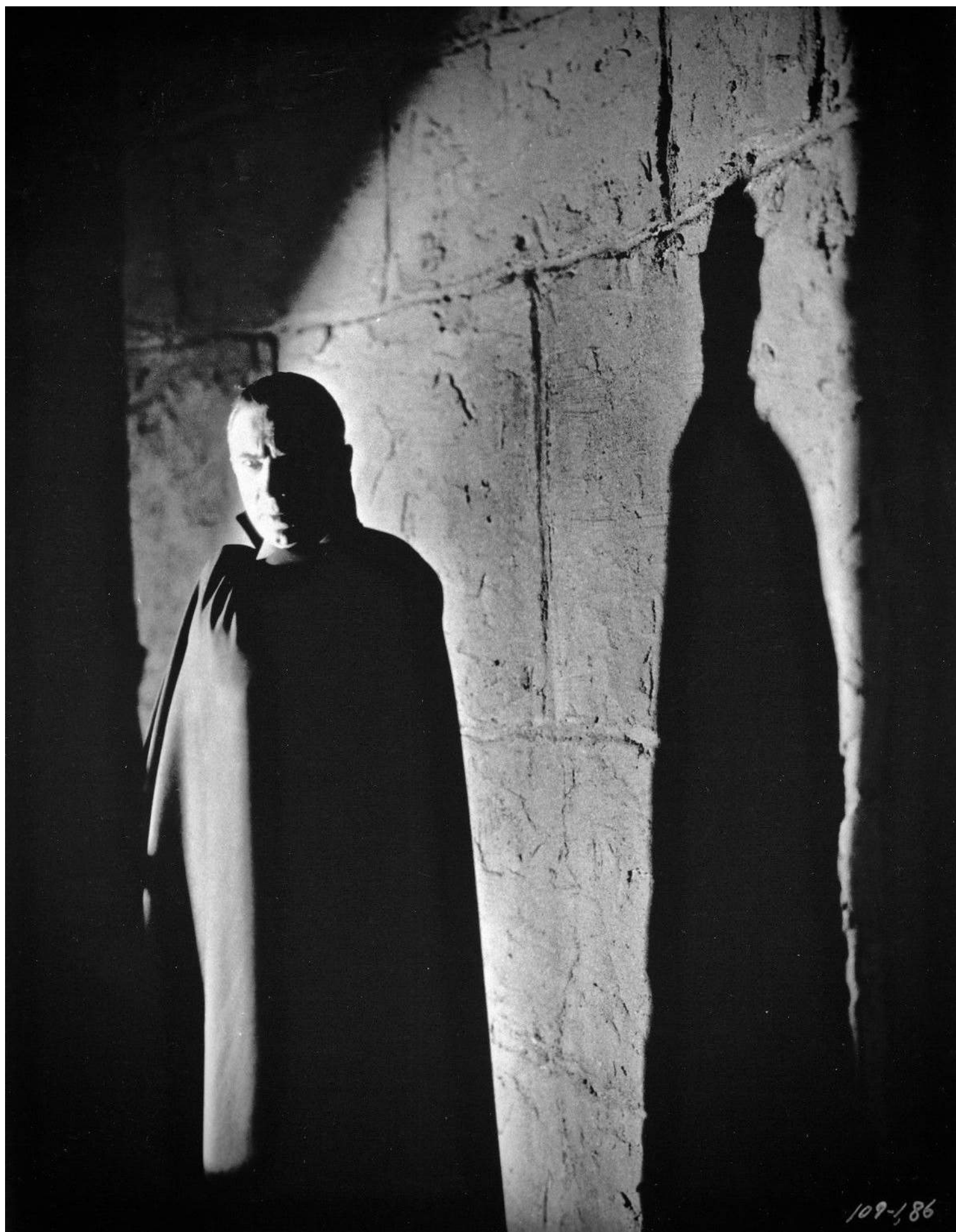


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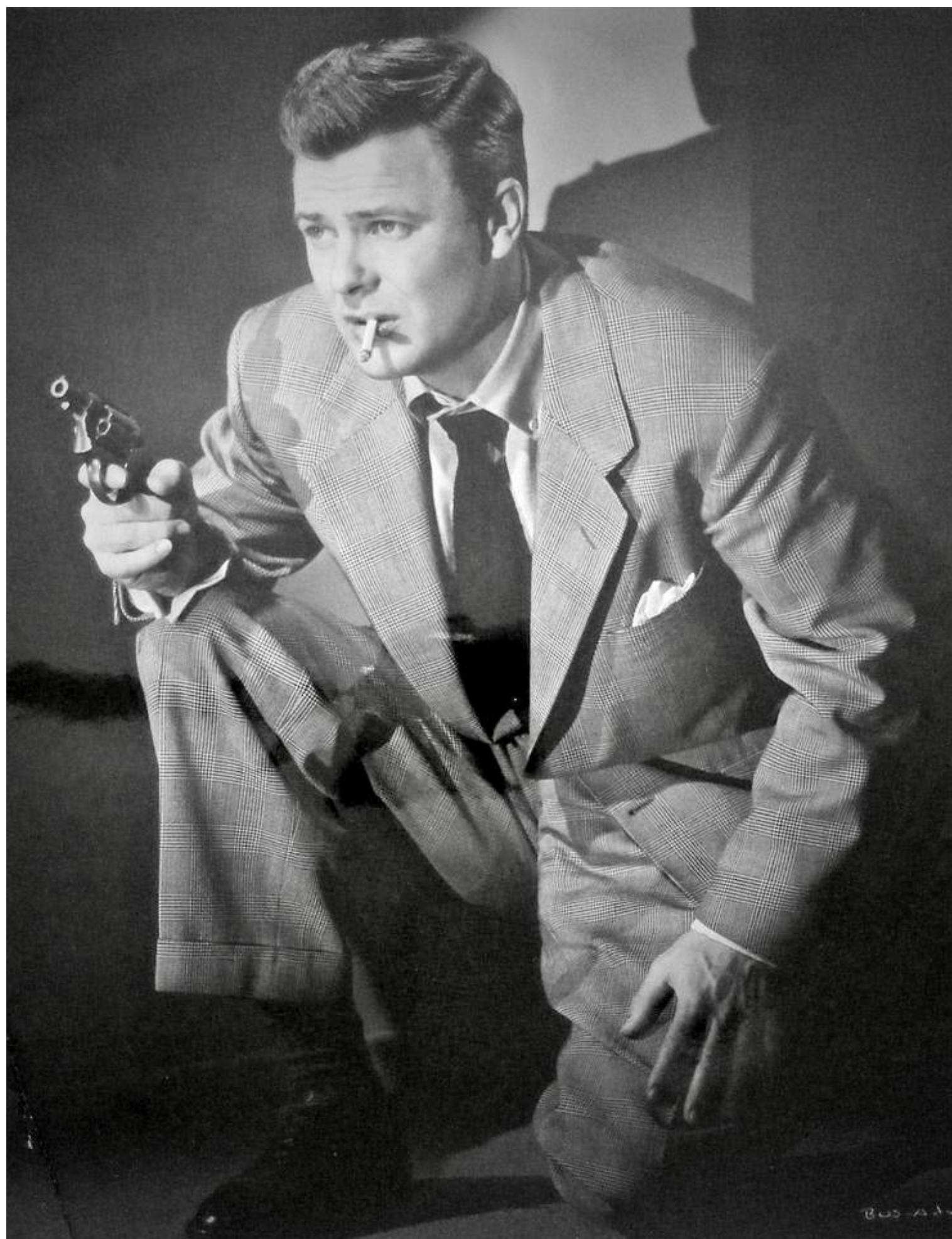


























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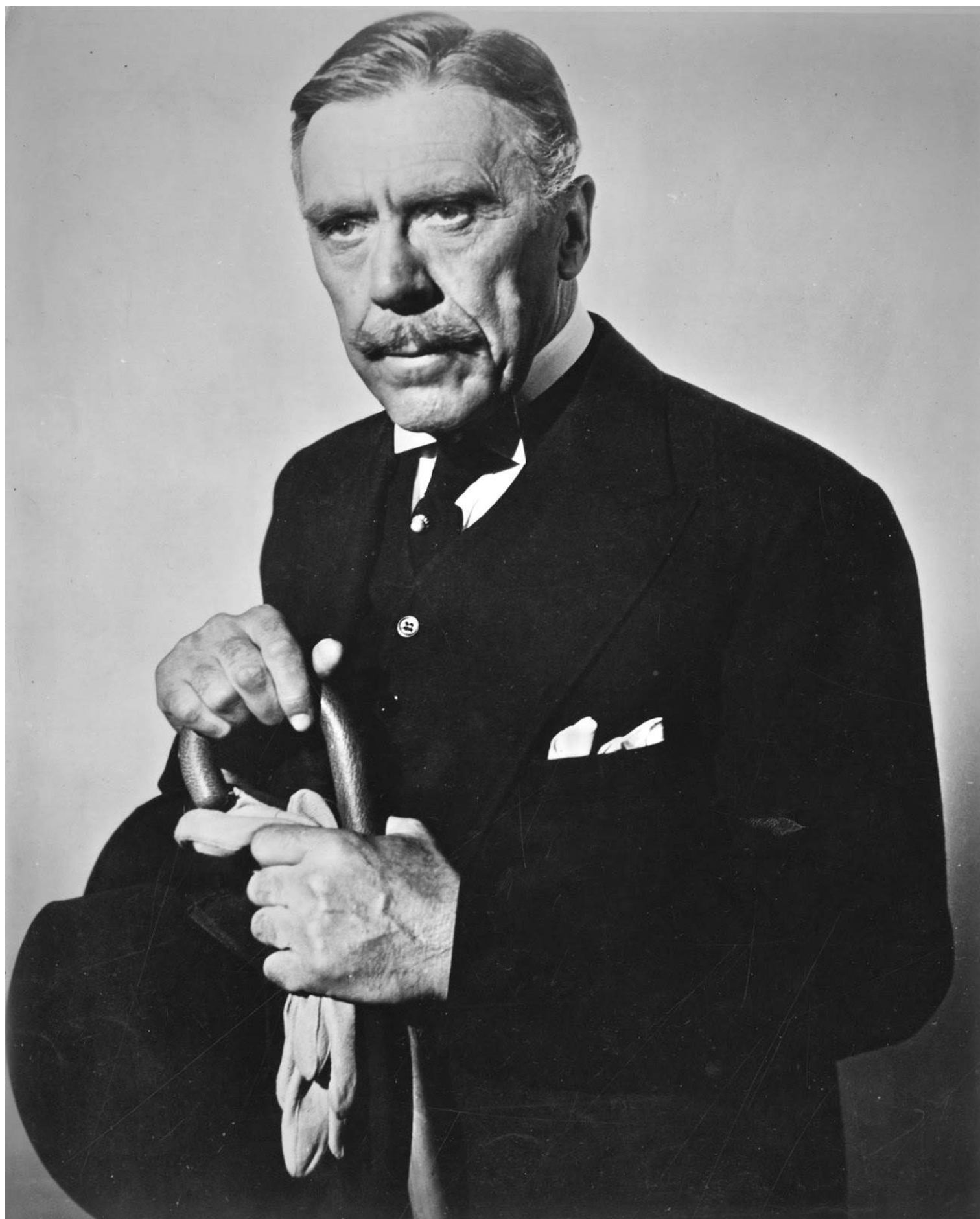






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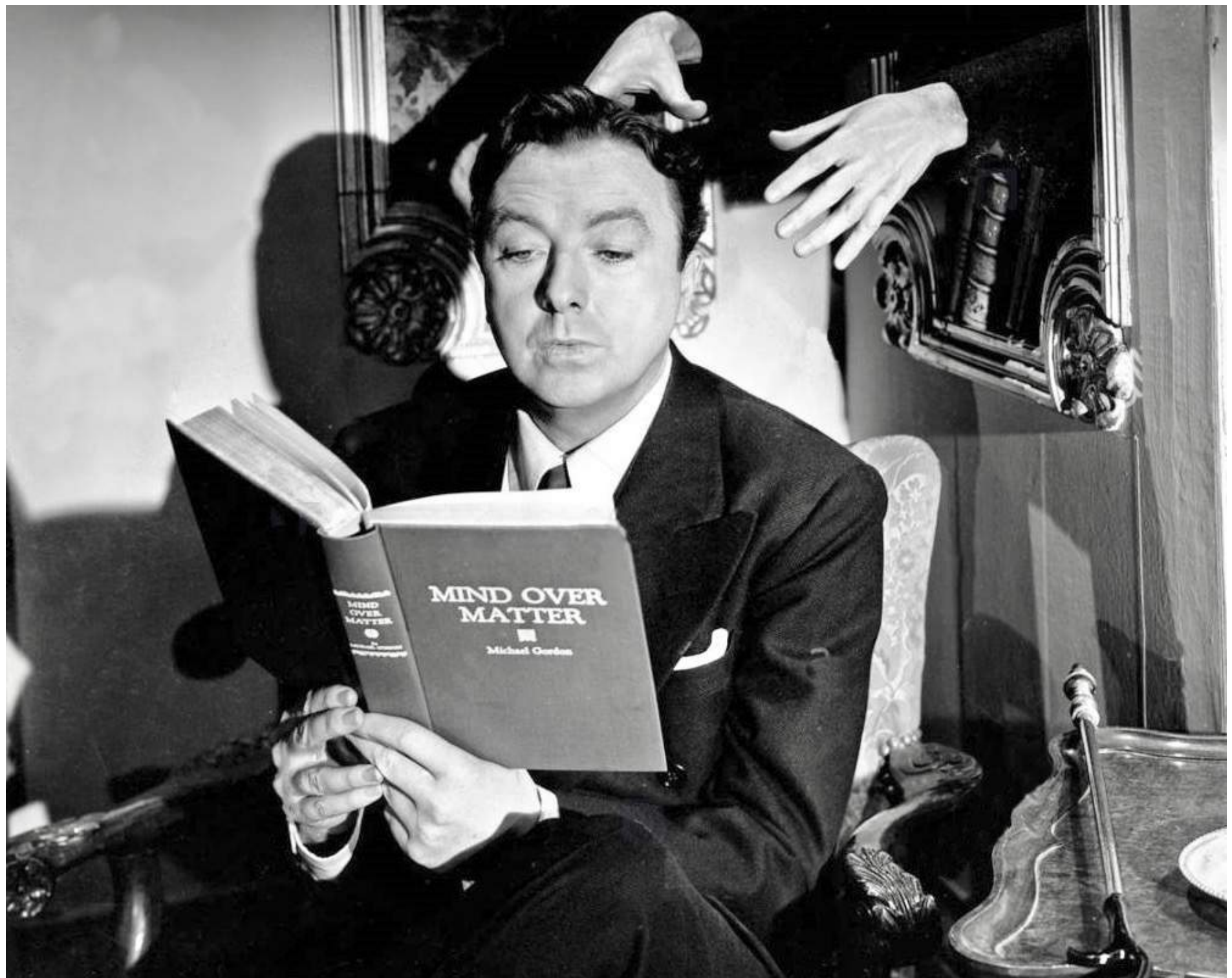


































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